

Spirit and Ritual

The Morse Collection of Ancient Chinese Art

TEXT BY ROBERT L. THORP AND VIRGINIA BOWER

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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EXHIBITION HELD AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

JULY 1, 1982, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 5, 1982

ON THE COVER: Chia wine vessel (no. 2), Late Shang period (1200–1151 B.C.)

FRONTISPIECE: Chüeh wine vessel and ku wine goblet (nos. 7, 8), Late Shang period (1100–1051 B.C.)

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Foreword

In 1947, at a time when few Westerners were avidly collecting Chinese art, Earl and Irene Morse made their first acquisition, a ritual bronze vessel dating from the Shang dynasty. That this particular piece is no longer in their collection by no means diminishes its importance, for it ignited the Morses' interest in Chinese antiquities and served as the impetus for subsequent purchases, many of which are now part of the Museum's collection. Over the years the Morses' devotion to Chinese art, expressed through support of scholarship and exhibitions as well as through their personal connoisseurship, has grown. An important exhibition of their Ming and Ch'ing paintings, *In Pursuit of Antiquity*, was held at the Museum in 1970, and, through their friendship with Wen Fong, special consultant for Far Eastern affairs, their commitment to the Museum continues undiminished.

The present exhibition of fifty-nine objects focuses on three spiritual realms of Chinese antiquity—ritual bronze vessels, tomb figurines, and Buddhist sculptures—and is further testimony to the Morses' discernment as collectors. We are grateful to Robert L. Thorp, assistant professor of Chinese art and archaeology at Princeton University, and to Virginia Bower, a graduate student at Princeton, coauthors of the informative catalogue that accompanies the exhibition. For coordinating this project, I wish to thank Alfreda Murck, assistant curator in the Department of Far Eastern Art. Finally, I want to thank Earl and Irene Morse themselves for their support in the past and for all they continue to do to enrich the collection of Far Eastern art at the Metropolitan. Their warmth, enthusiasm, and open-minded response to new challenges is a steadfast resource.

PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO
Director
The Metropolitan
Museum of Art

Preface

This exhibition marks an important pause in a collector's journey that began in an auction gallery some thirty-five years ago. At that time I was the successful bidder for a heavily encrusted bronze ho, a ritual wine vessel with a spout—the prototype of the modern teapot. When I saw the group of vessels offered for sale, the prospect of owning one of the exotic and mysterious objects was so exciting that I was emboldened to bid for the ho at the low end of the estimate. To my surprise and delight, I won it. Early the next week I was off to The Metropolitan Museum of Art to see Alan Priest, then curator of Far Eastern art. He greeted me warmly, and, after examining the ho, advised me that it was a genuine Early Shang piece, at least thirty-five hundred years old. So did my journey as a collector of Chinese art begin. Since Alan Priest played such a helpful part at the outset, I have promised the Museum, as a gift in his memory, the Sui stone sculpture (no. 56).

Archaic Chinese bronzes have been appreciated by the Chinese since antiquity. They were valued by historians as primary documents, by epigraphers as examples of early written Chinese, and by calligraphers as powerful graphic designs. The Western viewer is impressed by the sophistication and artistry of the casting and design; these pieces hold a mysterious beauty and allure, enhanced by the striking colors of the patination. By contrast, it is interesting to realize that the twelve-hundred-year-old ceramic funerary figures have been collected in Japan and the West for less than a hundred years and in China itself for an even shorter time. The reason is simple: it was considered sacrilegious to remove these “spirit articles” from tombs and in poor taste to display them. Only after the construction of railroads in China at the end of the nineteenth century did these objects come to light and enter collections abroad. Chinese scholars then began to study them—much like the bronzes—for what they reveal about China's past.

When I decided to have the most outstanding objects in my collection exhibited and published, I was of course concerned that the authors of the catalogue be scholars who would communicate my own excitement about the works I have collected. I have the greatest admiration for Robert L. Thorp and Virginia Bower. Robert Thorp, of Princeton University, who contributed the essay and the entries on the bronzes and Buddhist sculpture, has dealt in depth with the archaeological and social history of these precious objects. Virginia Bower, also of Princeton University, has written the essay and catalogue entries on ceramics. Their contributions to the catalogue are examples of the high quality of research and scholarship made possible by the avid attention paid to China's archaeological past in the People's Republic itself.

The collection owes much to the antiquities dealers who guided me in my purchasing and brought many objects to my attention. Alice Boney of New York long ago led me to the unique pair of monumental bronze hu (nos. 20, 21). My thanks also go to Giuseppe Eskenazi of London, whose expertise is expressed in the many objects in the collection he helped me to acquire. My thanks go as well to Michael Weisbrod of New York, whose boldness in acquiring masterworks is seen in the huge camel and foreign rider (no. 45), the unique pair of Northern Ch'i warriors (nos. 25, 26), and the Wei civil official (no. 24).

I am grateful to many on the staff of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Polly Cone, of the Museum's Editorial Department, assumed the responsibility of the most attractive catalogue, designed by Michael Hentges. Maureen Healy planned the installation of the objects in the Museum galleries. Several members of the Department of Far Eastern Art have played important roles. Alfreda Murck, assistant curator-administrator, combines scholarship with rare organizational skills. She has patiently moved between collector and various departments of the Museum to bring the exhibition and catalogue to fruition. My gratitude also goes to Jean Schmitt, whose help goes back to the days of Alan Priest's curatorship. Wen Fong, special consultant for Far Eastern affairs, is a superb scholar and energetic curator whose friendship and guidance have enhanced my experience as a collector over the years.

Finally, to my wife, Irene, my thanks for the important role she has played in assembling this collection. It is to her that I owe the awakened appreciation of art that is expressed in this exhibition.

EARL MORSE



A Primer on the Bronze Caster's Art

ROBERT L. THORP

Sometime during the ninth century B.C., in a small Chinese state called San—situated near modern-day Pao-chi in western Shensi Province—an earl commissioned a set of ritual vessels. Artisans of a foundry, perhaps in San, cast the vessels, which included kuei of a type very popular at the time (see no. 18). At some later date, the vessels were buried, either in a cache for safekeeping or as ritual furnishings for a tomb. They remained in the earth for centuries. When they first reappeared, Chinese antiquarians of the last century prized them not only because they appeared to be artifacts from the Three Dynasties, the Hsia, Shang, and Chou, but also because of their inscriptions. The vessels were dispersed, going eventually to several collections, including that of Earl Morse in New York. In this stage of their history, the ritual vessels of the earl of San were studied, photographed, and catalogued, and their inscriptions deciphered.

Until the last few decades, the great majority of Chinese ritual vessels were recovered by peasants or tomb robbers and were passed from Chinese collectors to antiquities dealers and, finally, to museums and private collections. Today this life cycle has been revised. Now, Chinese archaeologists rather than tomb robbers remove the ritual vessels from their resting places, and Chinese museums, rather than the international antiquities market, receive the new finds. Undocumented vessels such as those in the Morse collection supply few clues to their history. Artifacts recovered by scientific archaeology, coming from a defined context, reveal more. In either case, and, like all objects from a remote time and a culture radically different from our own, these artifacts raise many questions. When were they made and where? How were they cast? What were they used for? How were they decorated? What do their inscriptions mean?

The dates assigned to the entries in this catalogue are at best crude approximations. We lack reliable dates for even the most renowned historical events that occurred before the middle of the ninth century B.C. Working with conventional textual sources, Chinese and Western scholars have proposed a plethora of dates for the signal events of the Shang and Western Chou periods, but none of these proposals has gained universal acceptance. Insights derived from astronomy and epigraphic evidence—in particular records of eclipses in the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions—offer a basis for plausible estimates. David Keightley has suggested the period about 1200 B.C. for the activity of Wu Ting, the first Shang king whose divinations can be identified with certainty.¹ By estimating the average lengths of the reigns of the Shang kings after Wu Ting, Keightley posits a date of about 1050–40 B.C. for the Chou conquest, the key date in Shang-Chou chronology. Since many other scholars have arrived at much the same estimate, these approximations will serve as the basis for the datings proposed in this catalogue.

More relevant for our purposes are the periods devised by archaeologists, based on data from field archaeology, on stratigraphic and typological studies, and on epigraphic sources—oracle-bone and bronze inscriptions. Needless to say, whenever epigraphic material is redated, archaeological periods must also be revised. The virtue of the systems used by archaeologists is that they allow us to arrange a wide variety of artifacts, both those from controlled excavations and those of uncertain provenance, in a relative sequence marked at key points by dates. For example, a vessel like the Morse li-ting (no. 12) can be compared with a virtually identical vessel from a known and datable context, a grave in the area of the Western Chou capital outside modern Sian. The date the archaeologists assign to that find can only be

1. David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History* (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 171–76.

approximate and must inevitably hinge on the interpretation of inscriptions. Since a number of excavated analogues are available, one gains a good sense of when this particular variety of li-ting flourished, how early it first appeared, and how late it persisted.

Archaeologists now generally divide the Shang civilization into Early and Late periods, a scheme followed here.² Early Shang is divided into two archaeological phases, Lower and Upper Erh-li-kang, named after a site near the city of Chengchow in Honan. One vessel in the Morse collection—chia no. 1—may be assigned to the Late Upper Erh-li-kang phase by analogy with excavated examples. The dates adopted here for Early Shang—about 1600–1200 B.C.—derive from carbon-14 datings, but therefore contain a significant margin of error. Even if these dates are revised, the relative position of chia no. 1 in Shang chronology is clear.

Tsou Heng of Peking University subdivides the Late Shang period into three phases—Yin-hsü II, III, and IV—based upon his meticulous study of the sites near Anyang, called in Chinese the “ruins of Yin” (Yin-hsü).³ These three archaeological phases are keyed to the reigns of Shang kings, whose approximate dates are supplied from David Keightley’s estimates (see Chronology, page 13). Many of the hundreds of bronze vessels excavated from sites at Yin-hsü can be dated approximately using Tsou Heng’s criteria. Nonetheless, the dates that appear in our entries are not precise; “ca. 1200–1151 B.C.” can only mean “approximately the first half of the twelfth century B.C.” The usual words of caution apply: a bronze vessel taken from a tomb cannot be dated to a period that is later than that assigned to the tomb, but could be dated to a somewhat earlier period. The reliability of the dates depends upon the amount of excavated material available for each phase. Thus, we can date the Morse li-ting (no. 12) to the Early Western Chou period because it differs from the li-ting typical of the Yin-hsü IV or Yin-hsü III phase of the Late Shang period.

Archaeologists active in the region of the Western Chou capital, west of the Feng River (Feng-hsi) outside Sian in Shensi Province, assign their finds to phases defined through stratigraphy and typology and aided by the bronze vessels’ inscriptions.⁴ In this system, Feng-hsi I is contemporaneous with the Yin-hsü IV phase; Feng-hsi II corresponds to the period of the first Chou kings, and so on. A large number of bronze inscriptions and a few authentic textual sources enhance our understanding of Western Chou chronology. For this catalogue, assigning the undocumented vessels of the Morse collection to Early, Middle, and Late Western Chou will suffice. However, even when a Morse vessel corresponds closely to a bronze with a firmly datable inscription, we cannot absolutely fix the date of its manufacture. Rather the dated bronzes serve as benchmarks to establish stages in the life cycle of the type.

Only a few Shang and Chou bronze-casting sites have been found. At Chengchow, the major Early Shang site, two foundries have been reported, and two sites are also known at Anyang. The data available for these foundries are distressingly scant—terse descriptions of miscellaneous finds of slag and mold fragments.⁵ These discoveries do little more than demonstrate that casting did in fact take place. How many foundries may have been active at any period? Who obtained the ore and where? Who smelted the ore? Who prepared the molds and designed the vessels’ decoration? How did patrons interact with artisans? What status did the artisans have? These questions and many more remain unanswered.

Although we refer to Anyang or other sites as casting centers, our discussion of production at these sites is largely speculative and relies more on subjective impressions than on firm evidence. Some studies have made a distinction between “metropolitan” and “regional” production in Shang and Western Chou, but this is a superficial description that reveals our ignorance of what happened where and how different

2. Kwang-chih Chang, *Shang Civilization* (New Haven, 1980), passim.

3. Tsou Heng, *Collected Essays on the Archaeology of Hsia, Shang and Chou* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 1–92.

4. *Report of Excavations West of the Feng River* (in Chinese; Peking, 1962); *K’ao-ku hsiieh-pao* 1980/4, pp. 485–87.

5. Chang, *Shang Civilization*, pp. 98–99, 126, 233–34, 277, 279; see also Noel Barnard and Satō Tamotsu, *Metallurgical Remains of Ancient China* (Tokyo, 1975).

CHRONOLOGY OF SHANG AND WESTERN CHOU PERIODS

EARLY SHANG PERIOD	Lower Erh-li-kang phase	16th–15th centuries B.C.
	Upper Erh-li-kang phase (no. 1)	14th–13th centuries B.C.
LATE SHANG PERIOD	Yin-hsü II phase	ca. 1200–1151 B.C.
	Kings Wu Ting, Tsu Keng, Tsu Chia (nos. 2, 3)	
	Yin-hsü III phase	ca. 1150–1101/1091 B.C.
	Kings Lin Hsin (?), Keng Ting, Wu Yi, Wen Wu Ting (nos. 4–6)	
WESTERN CHOU PERIOD	Yin-Hsü IV (Feng-hsi I) phase	ca. 1100/1090–1051/1041 B.C.
	Kings Ti Yi, Ti Hsin (nos. 7–11)	
	Feng-hsi II (Early) phase	11th–10th centuries B.C.
	Kings Wu, Ch'eng, K'ang, Chao (nos. 12–17)	
	Feng-hsi III (Middle) phase	10th–9th centuries B.C.
	Kings Mu, Kung, Yi, Hsiao, Yi (nos. 18, 19)	
	Feng-hsi IV (Late) phase	9th century–771 B.C.
	Kings Li, (Kung-ho), Hsüan, Yu (nos. 20, 21, 22?)	

centers may have interacted. Excavated objects exhibit an admirable variety of styles that often vary between regions within one period. Thus, vessels excavated under controlled conditions have a secure provenance only in the sense that we know where they were buried and that we can authenticate them. Lacking detailed knowledge of foundries, we cannot rely on technical studies to tell us where a bronze object was made. Stylistic analysis supplies the best criterion for grouping bronze vessels, provided such analysis operates with explicit working assumptions rather than unspoken biases. In time, more attention to the undeciphered graphs we take to be clan signs, combined with provenance data and stylistic analysis, may yield a clearer understanding of the sources of bronze artifacts and their styles.

Our best sources for understanding the ritual functions of the bronze vessels are treatises on rites and ceremonies that date from late in the Bronze Age. These texts have often been denigrated because of their questionable dates, difficult vocabulary, and the suspicion that they may have been written by later specialists on ritual who projected their idealized conceptions onto antiquity. Some skepticism is deserved, but ritual texts nonetheless remain an important source for studying the bronze art and its significance.⁶ Data from excavations supplement the information derived from these textual sources.

The ubiquitous association of chüeh and ku (see nos. 7 and 8) in Shang graves contrasts with the equally strong association of ting and kuei (see nos. 11–14) in Chou tombs. A closed find like Tomb 5 at Anyang supplies a wealth of information on what constituted a ritual assemblage, the assortment of types, the use of pairs and sets, the mixed origins of vessels, the presence of vessels used in life with those made for the funeral, and so on.⁷ Chou tombs bear out the prescriptions of the ritual treatises that the numbers of

6. Hayashi Minao, "The Six Tsun and Six Yi of the *Chou Li* and Archaeological Artifacts" (in Japanese), *Tôhō gakuho* 52 (March 1980), pp. 1–62.

7. *The Tomb of Fu Hao at Yin-hsü* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980); Robert L. Thorp, "The Date of Tomb 5 at Yinxu, Anyang," *Artibus Asiae* 43 (1982), forthcoming.

vessels, especially ting and kuei, were regulated by the criterion of social rank.⁸ Although analysis of the ritual requirements is fundamental to our understanding of the bronze vessels, we must also examine the stylistic properties of the vessels and relate these findings to what we can learn about the vessels' function.

Every student of the bronze art must wrestle with the confusing vocabulary of names assigned to the many varieties of ritual vessels. Many of these names, as is often pointed out, are conventional appellations devised by antiquarians long before scientific archaeologists began their investigations in China. In most cases, the conventional names imply a functional role for the vessels. A ting tripod is by definition a meat-cooking vessel; a hu is a wine-storage vessel. These definitions have been proven accurate by archaeological discoveries of charred bones in ting and the dregs of alcoholic spirits in hu. Yet the categories we apply, whether chosen by antiquarians or more recently devised, do not necessarily coincide with the ideas of those who made and used the bronze vessels. To differentiate a Shang lei from a Shang tsun by the shape of the vessel's shoulder or to distinguish a ring-footed vessel from one with legs may be useful for us, but has little if anything to do with the original terms that appear in the vessels' inscriptions. The language of the inscriptions is generally vague, a single generic term or phrase being applied to many types (see no. 13).

Conventional names for types may obscure the development of the shape of certain vessels. Consider the case of hu and yu. In Early Shang, these two types differed only in the way they were carried: a perishable handle affixed through lugs at the neck on the hu versus a bronze bail handle on the yu. Yet, there are hu with tall necks and bail handles in Western collections. Max Loehr dubbed one example, in the Art Museum, Princeton University, a "hu with handle," rather than using the more awkward name, "tall-neck yu." In Late Shang, the development of the hu led to significant changes in the yu, as Virginia Kane has demonstrated.⁹ Semantic confusion aside, understanding the typological development of bronze vessels demands a vocabulary more precise than that provided by conventional labels. A useful designation for sharpening our appreciation of these matters is "mode," used to define the particular manner in which the body of a functional type is rendered.¹⁰ Thus, the ting tripod has several modes, among them the common variety with round bowl, the ting with rectangular section (no. 11), and the ting with a body like a li tripod (no. 12). Modes have their own histories, their own origins in relation to other types and modes, and their own significance in the history of styles. In this catalogue, the two chia (nos. 1 and 2) are examples of two stages in the evolution of a type, while the several Morse kuei, the most numerous type represented here, illustrate typological development in two modes.

The majority of bronze vessels, weapons, and other paraphernalia suggest that conventions dictated how each specific type was to be decorated. The kuei in this catalogue exhibit some variety in shape, but most features of their decoration are similar if not identical. One may speak of an "order" for the decoration of kuei, principles of design and decoration that governed the general appearance of the type and unify specimens of diverse shape or date. For example, the animal head in relief at the neck band in the center of each face is common to all the early kuei seen here and is a feature that appears on pottery examples as well. By recognizing such orders, either for types as a whole or for modes, we can further refine our analysis and arrive at more precise groupings.

Stylistic principles changed with time, as the contrast between kuei no. 5 and no. 18 so dramatically illustrates. On early vessels, such as the chia no. 1, surface embellishments are confined to narrow bands in panels dictated by mold sections. Later, decoration was spread across more zones; the Shang designers

8. Robert L. Thorp, "Burial Practices of Bronze Age China," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. by Wen Fong (New York, 1980), pp. 51–64; *Shang and Chou Archaeology* (in Chinese; Peking, 1979), passim.

9. Max Loehr, *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China* (New York, 1968), no. 24; Virginia Kane, "The Chronological Significance of the Inscribed Ancestor Dedication in the Periodization of Shang Dynasty Bronze Vessels," *Artibus Asiae* 35 (1973), pp. 363–70.

10. Chang, *Shang Civilization*, pp. 23–27.

stacked motifs in tiers, anchoring the tiers along strong common axes and varying height to fit changes in the shape of the body (see nos. 2, 3, 6, 8). The symmetry and balance evident in such vessels cannot be attributed exclusively to the designers' use of the piece-mold casting technique. These traits infuse all the arts of the period: ceramic decoration; wood, stone, and jade carving; architectural plans; and even script. Symmetry and balance were basic characteristics of Shang culture, manifestations of social and religious values as well as guiding principles for casters and other artisans. The hierarchic order of Shang society and theology and the style of its bronze art are inseparable.¹¹

Leaving aside shape and stylistic principles, it is the motifs the bronzes carry—compelling yet mysterious images that defy easy identification or explanations—that engage our eyes and imaginations. Certain motifs recur with great regularity: the animal mask (conventional name *t'ao-t'ieh*), profile dragon (*k'uei*), cicadas, serpents, and spiral ground pattern (*lei-wen*). The evolution of these motifs, that is, their stylistic development, has been the major preoccupation of art historians. Most notable among these is Max Loehr, whose insights have yet to be outdated.¹² Yet Loehr's brilliant theory of "five Anyang bronze styles," with its emphasis on the development of key motifs and the appearance of relief decoration, accounts for only a part of the total range of bronze decoration. The great task before us is to analyze other imagery, recognizable animals and nonrepresentational motifs (such as the field of bosses and band of whorls on *kuei* no. 5), and to integrate the results of this analysis with our knowledge of the evolution of the better-known motifs.

In addition, some families of vessels encompassing a variety of types exhibit a common fund of motifs rendered in identical or compatible styles. The *chia* no. 2 and *fang-lei* no. 3 are so consonant in their proportions, in the order of their decoration, and in the finer details of their draftsmanship that they may in fact have come from the same workshop. In some instances vessels may have been made as part of a set for one patron; yet as the excavation of Tomb 5 in Anyang indicates, a single patron may have owned vessels that belong to several larger stylistic groupings. Bifurcated serpents (as on the *fang-ting*, no. 11) and large animal masks flanked by snub-nosed dragons (as on the *li-ting*, no. 12) are two motifs that identify families of vessels. By analyzing all the motifs and families and correlating this data with archaeological and epigraphic information, we can reconstruct the history of Shang and Chou bronze art and enhance our understanding of the society that produced it.

The search for meaning in the bronze art must not be defined simplistically, as if an oracle bone could someday be found explaining the *t'ao-t'ieh*. Nor should this search be excluded from the proper concerns of art historians, for whom style must always be of critical importance. The ritual vessels were made as equipment for the Shang and Chou cults, which occupied a central position within the life of the community and the elite. Our understanding of these cults may be incomplete, but we can appreciate the high solemnity and wealth invested in them. We must ask if the motifs, images, and styles reflect more than the artistic choices of bronze casters and the force of convention. What did the pervasive images mean to the people who made the vessels? Do combinations of images have significance? By posing such questions we can begin to discover whether the motifs were devised purely as aesthetic features or whether their significance went beyond considerations of sheer design.¹³

11. David N. Keightley, "The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Shang Political Culture," *History of Religions* 17 (1978), pp. 221–22.

12. Max Loehr, "The Bronze Styles of the Anyang Period (1300–1028 B.C.)," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 7 (1953), pp. 42–53.

13. K. C. Chang, "The Animal in Shang and Chou Bronze Art," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41:2 (1981), pp. 527–54.



1 CHIA WINE VESSEL

Early Shang period, Upper Erh-li-kang phase,
14th–15th centuries B.C.
Height: 13 in. (33 cm.)
Spurious inscription: *tso fu hsin*, “made for
Father Hsin”

The earliest vessel in the Morse collection and a fine example of an early stage in the development of the type, this chia nonetheless exhibits atypical and problematic features. The vessel seems to consist of many separate parts that have been combined. Splayed legs of triangular section are grafted to the swelling skirt from which a flaring neck rises. A strap handle is affixed over one leg, while a pair of thick posts stands at the rim. The buoyant effect created by the stance of the legs, their sharp points, and the trumpet mouth compensates for the lack of integration of this vessel's several parts. Decoration is restricted to a single register in three panels corresponding to mold sections. The front panel, opposite the handle, bears a pair of “eyes” in relief, surrounded by curling bands that presage the dominant animal-mask imagery of later vessels (cf. no. 2). Similarly, the decoration on the side panels may be seen as inchoate, profile dragons (cf. no. 6).

Vessels of this shape and decoration are well known from controlled excavations. The closest parallels to the Morse chia are from P'an-lung-ch'eng, a Shang site in Hupei Province. Our vessel resembles Type IIa from that site, as do specimens in the Singer and Sackler collections.¹ Archaeological evidence indicates that this kind of chia flourished in the Upper Erh-li-kang phase.

The carefully modeled animal head on the handle is unusual on vessels of this shape, which is characteristic of an early phase. It may indicate that chia of this kind continued into the Late Upper Erh-li-kang phase. Animal heads with conspicuous snout, carefully rendered eyes and ears, and swept-back horns are more often found on vessels of later periods, such as a tall chia in Japan and one in Honolulu.²

The heavy posts with caps and inscription are problematic. Caps with a tall, flaring profile are characteristic of chia with taller and narrower proportions.³ The fretted band and inverted shields on the caps are unknown on Shang chia, and the inscription is written in script of Late Shang or Early Western Chou style. The gray metal visible at the base of one post is softer than the alloy of the body and suggests that these incongruous posts may have been made later and affixed to the vessel's body, perhaps in modern times.

1. *Wenwu*, 1976/2, p. 35, fig. 39; Max Loehr, *Relics of Ancient China from the Collection of Dr. Paul Singer* (New York, 1965), no. 8, and *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China* (New York, 1968), no. 8.
2. *A Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Oriental Arts* (New York, 1969), vol. I, color pl. 2; Robert J. Poor, *Ancient Chinese Bronzes, Ceramics and Jades in the Collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts* (Honolulu, 1979), no. 19.
3. Li Chi, *Studies of the Bronze Chia Vessel* (in Chinese; Nankang, 1968), pls. 10, 12.



2 CHIA WINE VESSEL

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü II phase,

ca. 1200–1151 B.C.

Height: 19¼ in. (49 cm.)

Inscription: *Yu* (clan sign)

The tense profile and smooth integration of parts in this vessel reflect the balance and poise we associate with mature chia. This vessel typifies the Shang bronze caster's predilection for manipulating a few forms and motifs. Elongated legs account for half the height, disregarding the posts. Only slightly indented, the waist of this chia contrasts with the more emphatic transition from skirt to neck on the earlier example (no. 1). The angle of the skirt profile visually unites the lower legs and the upper neck, creating a smooth, taut arc. The caps echo the shape of the body, but in inverted form. A rich decoration—animal masks with tall horns and erect tails against a ground of fine spirals—covers the body. The long, pendant blades on each leg are elaborations of the motifs around the neck and caps with animal masks added. The animal mask on the handle is a three-dimensional counterpoint to the two tiers of flat, major motifs on the body. The flanges are mimicked by the border designs on the legs.

Startling differences in style distinguish the two Morse chia, but the evolution from the early shape (no. 1) to the taller chia (no. 2) can be clearly documented. In vessels like that from Fei-hsi in Anhwei Province,¹ legs are rendered with a T-section rather than in a triangle, and the body zones are more uniform in their diameters with less abrupt transitions; tall, flaring caps are placed on the posts. Decoration is confined to the skirt, neck, and caps at this stage. On the chia from the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C., the legs have been elongated further and decoration has been added to the neck and legs. The Freer vessel and others like it bear legs of triangular section, but the legs carry depressions on two sides that testify to the earlier T-section form.² Taller legs, a higher neck, and a slimmer diameter relative to overall height create the taut silhouette of the Morse vessel. Vessels similar to the Morse chia are rare, although an example formerly in a Japanese collection could almost be called a mate.³

The two chia from Tomb 5 at Anyang, here dated to the late Yin-hsü II phase, stand at the next stage in this evolutionary sequence. The principal innovations seen on these chia are animal masks and rising blades in relief on the body that make the vessels appear heavier. Closely related examples are in the Nezu Museum, Tokyo, and the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.⁴

1. Wen Fong, ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China* (New York, 1980), no. 16.
2. John A. Pope et al., *The Freer Chinese Bronzes, Catalogue* (Washington, 1967), no. 20.
3. Sueji Umehara, *Selected Ancient Treasures Found at An-yang, Yin Sites* (in Japanese; Kyoto, 1940), pl. 49.
4. *The Tomb of Fu Hao at Yin-hsü* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pls. 35–38; Seiichi Mizuno, *Bronzes and Jades of Ancient China* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1959), no. 35; René d'Argencé, *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection* (San Francisco, 1977), no. 22.

3 FANG-LEI WINE CONTAINER

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü II phase,
ca. 1200–1151 B.C.
Height: 19½ in. (49.4 cm.)
Inscription undeciphered

As a type, the fang-lei is readily defined by its rectangular section, high-swelling shoulder, clearly articulated neck, and by a lid that resembles a four-slope roof. Like the Morse vessel, most fang-lei have a rectangular foot and animal heads and lugs in relief at the shoulder, with one lug at a lower level. On this fang-lei, hanging blades on the swelling body support two tiers of motifs at the shoulder. Foot and neck share a common motif; the lid is decorated in two zones, with the top zone inverted.

The motifs on this fang-lei are seen on other vessels from the Morse collection. The hanging-blade motif, which appears on the long, pointed legs of the chia no. 2 and other tripods, here becomes decoration for a broad, flat panel. This disposition of the motif creates a visual pun, so that when one views each panel straight on, the vessel resembles a tripod. Like the chia, the blades on the fang-lei are bordered by a design that mimics the flanges of the vessel. The lower shoulder band with its alternating whorls and vestigial dragons is also found on the kuei no. 5. A bifurcated serpent at the shoulder occurs on the fang-ting (no. 11), but in other details the motifs on that vessel differ considerably from this fang-lei.

As with other types of vessels, the bronze caster has orchestrated the motifs to harmonize with the fang-lei's shape and to enhance its essential features. The inverted animal-mask motif on the lid is well suited to the triangular field in which it is placed and echoes a similar motif in the hanging blades. The whorls and dragons seen at the shoulder are repeated in reduced scale on the lid. Lateral integration of the separate faces is achieved by placing hanging blades astride the corners of the body to frame a whole blade in the center of each face. By placing the blades around a corner, the designers of the fang-lei contradicted the usual principle requiring that the motifs of each panel be self-contained.

Fang-lei appeared rather suddenly in the Late Shang period, as did other types with rectangular (fang) sections. While some types such as the fang-i (which shares a rooflike lid with the fang-lei) appeared by the early Yin-hsü II phase, much of the experimentation with rectangular vessels seems to have taken place later in the phase, as the many examples in Tomb 5 at Anyang illustrate. In that assemblage we see old types such as chia, hu, and tsun rendered with rectangular sections. The two fang-lei in Tomb 5 differ from the Morse example in that they lack feet and flanges. They also incorporate relief in their surface decoration; the only other fang-lei scientifically excavated at Anyang was almost devoid of decoration and came from a late tomb at Ta-ssu-k'ung-ts'un.¹

Many fang-lei without documented provenance are in museum collections, most from periods later than the Morse fang-lei. However, one vessel formerly in the Owen Roberts



collection could well have come from the same workshop as the Morse fang-lei; the major difference between the two vessels is that the former substitutes a single shoulder band with confronted dragons for the double band on the Morse example.² The Morse chia no. 2 and this fang-lei are so consonant in their proportions, motifs, and draftsmanship that they may also have been produced by the same foundry.

1. *The Tomb of Fu Hao at Yin-hsü* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pl. 32; *K'ao-ku*, 1958/10, p. 55.

2. Ch'en Meng-chia and Matsumaru Michio, *A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections* (in Chinese; Tokyo, 1977), no. A783.



4 CH'I AX

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü III phase,

ca. 1150–1101 B.C.

Length: $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. (19.6 cm.)

Inscription: *ya-yi* (clan sign)

Bronze axes of moderate size are now generally called *ch'i*, while the term *yüeh* is reserved for larger specimens with broader blades, possibly used for human decapitation.¹ The Morse *ch'i* has a tang with shaft hole placed slightly off-center. Hafted at right angles to a shaft, the cutting edge of the blade, which is asymmetrical, curves inward more deeply in one direction. Both faces bear the same malachite inlay decoration: a whorl at the base of the blade and a clan sign (*ya-yi*—seen also on *kuei* no. 6) at the end of the tang. The clan sign is rendered in mirror images on each face. Two dragons, poised on their stubby noses, flank the clan sign. A similar dragon motif is found on the *li-ting*, no. 12. A mate to this weapon is in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and is said to come from the “Elephant Tomb”

opened in 1933 across the river from Hsiao-t'un.²

The corrosion of the bronze obscures the original coloristic effect of the use of stone inlay against dark metal. Such inlay forms a minor but significant trend in the decoration of Late Shang weapons. A bronze disk and *ko* dagger, both with inlay, from the Erh-li-t'ou site in Honan suggest that malachite inlay may have been used on a sporadic basis very early.³ Weapons with inlay may have been used primarily for ceremonial purposes. Inlay was a popular technique of decoration and was used on a variety of objects during the Yin-hsü II phase. Wood inlaid with ivory is known from some Anyang tomb chambers, and ivory goblets inlaid with malachite are represented in Tomb 5.

1. Hayashi Minao, *Chinese Weapons of the Yin and Chou Periods* (in Japanese; Kyoto, 1972), pp. 131–35.

2. William C. White, *Bronze Culture of Ancient China* (Toronto, 1956), p. 32.

3. *K'ao-ku*, 1976/4, pp. 260–61.



5 KUEI FOOD VESSEL

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü III-IV phase,
ca. 1150-1051 B.C.
Height: 7 in. (17.8 cm.)

6 KUEI FOOD VESSEL

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü III-IV phase,
ca. 1150-1051 B.C.
Height: 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (17.5 cm.)
Inscription: *ya-yi* (clan sign)

While both these kuei may be dated to the same period of Late Shang, they represent two modes of a single type and so differ both in form and in decoration. Along with ku, chüeh, and ting, the kuei is one of the most important ritual vessels found at the Anyang cemeteries.

The kuei with bosses (no. 5) stands on a tall ring foot decorated with paired dragons whose hooked snouts match their coiled tails. Three pairs of dragons circle the foot zone. The bowl widens slightly as it rises from the foot. Its surfaces are divided into a major band with five tiers of bosses and a narrow neck band with animal heads and whorls in relief and flat, vestigial dragons. A vessel almost identical in every particular was excavated at Lü-chai Village, in Fu-feng County, Shensi, in 1975.¹

The kuei with animal-mask decoration (no. 6) presents a different silhouette. A molding elevates the ring foot, as on the ku, no. 8. The bowl has a bulging S-profile, and the rim flares sharply. Large, coherent animal masks fill the surfaces of the bowl. Their faces, bodies, and horns are raised in relief with broad, relatively clean surfaces that contrast with the spiral ground pattern. Relief dragons—four to each half and paired on each side of the central flange—decorate the foot and neck. The flanges are thick, scored, and have projecting points. The small animal heads in the center of the neck band have ears that split into a V-shape.

Tomb 5 at Anyang contained somewhat earlier examples of each kuei mode, rendered at about half the size of the two Morse vessels.² If those kuei are dated as contemporaneous with the tomb itself, the two Morse kuei should fall into the Yin-hsü III or early Yin-hsü IV phase. Kuei vessels have considerable regularity in the order of their decoration. The small animal head at the neck of each vessel is generally found in this position and can also be observed on the two later examples—nos. 13 and 14. The same feature is found on pottery kuei at Anyang.³

The kuei with animal-mask decoration bears an inscription on the bottom of the bowl. The graph consists of the so-called *ya-hsing* cruciform shape atop a figure holding a stick in one hand. The inscription is conventionally read as *ya-yi*, meaning unknown.⁴ Most scholars take this pictogram to be a clan sign, and it is well known among fine vessels and weapons said to come from Anyang, such as the chia, p'ou, and tsun in the Nezu Museum, Tokyo, and a chia in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, among others.⁵ However, the pictogram on the Morse kuei is ren-

dered rather differently from those just cited; the *ya-hsing* is larger and the body torso is drawn in outline rather than as a solid lens. A diviner named Yi is known from early oracle-bone inscriptions and it may well be that his clan "commissioned" the Morse vessel.⁶ The same pictogram is found, inlaid with malachite, on the ch'i ax (no. 4).

1. *Bronzes of the Shang and Chou Unearthed in Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1979), vol. I, no. 50.
2. *The Tomb of Fu Hao at Yin-hsü* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pl. 16.
3. *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1958/3, p. 68.
4. Chou Fa-kao et al., *An Etymological Dictionary of Ancient Chinese Bronze Inscriptions* (in Chinese; Hong Kong, 1974), pp. 298-320.
5. Sueji Umehara, *Selected Ancient Treasures Found at Anyang, Yin Sites* (in Japanese; Kyoto, 1940), pls. 38, 39, 48; René d'Argencé, *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection* (San Francisco, 1977), no. 22.
6. David N. Keightley, *Sources of Shang History* (Berkeley, 1978), p. 195.



7 CHÜEH WINE VESSEL

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü IV phase,
ca. 1100–1051 B.C.
Height: 8 in. (20.3 cm.)
Inscription within handle undeciphered

8 KU WINE GOBLET

Late Shang period, Yin-hsü IV phase,
ca. 1100–1051 B.C.
Height: 12½ in. (31.6 cm.)
Inscription: *chü* (clan sign)

Chüeh and ku are perhaps the most ubiquitous of Shang ritual vessels. Both appeared relatively early in bronze, and both were maintained through the Shang period, surviving for a time into the Western Chou. At all times, they are found as pairs. Crudely made, pottery chüeh and ku were the minimal investment of ritual paraphernalia for graves. While this chüeh and ku have no certifiable provenance, they are both from the same period and could in theory have been placed in the same tomb as a pair.

Compact but dynamic, the chüeh is an example of the late form of the Shang type. Three saber-like legs support the pendulous body, while a wide pouring spout arcs over

one leg, balanced by the pointed tail. A broad band of decoration covers the waist, with rising triangles above it and an animal head on the handle. The animal mask on each face is coherent, although the inscription cartouche splits one mask.

The attenuated ku is divided into roughly equal parts by the open area above the second band of decoration at the waist. The dramatic trumpet mouth is almost twice as wide as the foot. Foot and waist zones are segmented by low flanges and feature elements in relief that evoke parts of a mask: jaws, brows, horns, and so forth. This order of the decoration—masks at foot and waist, rising blades on the neck, and short bands above and below the waist with dragons, serpents, or cicadas—is typical of a large family of ku. The dragons and serpents with all their heads pointed left insert a minor note of asymmetry.

Chüeh and ku like the Morse examples are well attested at cemetery sites surrounding Anyang, including Hsi-pei-kang, Ta-ssu-k'ung-ts'un, and the zones west of Hsiao-t'un.¹ Vessels of similar shape and decoration were found in graves dated to the Yin-hsü IV phase at the latter site, hence our dating.

1. Li Chi, *Studies of the Bronze Ku-Beaker* (in Chinese; Nankang, 1964); *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1955/9; *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1979/1.



9, 10 CHÜEH WINE VESSELS

Late Shang–Early Western Chou period,
11th century B.C.

Height: (a) 8¾ in. (22 cm.)

(b) 8½ in. (21.5 cm.)

Inscription: clan sign and *fu hsin*,
“Father Hsin”

Ritual vessels were frequently produced as pairs, each member of the pair carrying identical decoration. Pairs of vessels are prominent in assemblages from graves as early as the Erh-li-kang phase and continued to be important through the Late Shang period. While a minimal investment of ritual vessels might have comprised a set consisting of a single ku and a single chüeh (cf. nos. 7, 8), a more amply furnished burial might include multiples of each ritual type. Tomb 232 at Hsiao-t'un, a pre-dynastic burial (Late Erh-li-kang phase or Yin-hsü I phase), included two ku, two chüeh, two chia, ting, p'an, p'ou, and lei in addition to weapons and jadesstones.¹ The richest Shang tomb ever opened, Tomb 5 at Anyang, held over two hundred vessels, with most types represented by many examples. Among vessels without excavated provenance, the two Morse chüeh are unusual in that they remained united as a pair; more often, vessels made as pairs have been separated by dealers and sold to different collectors.

Each of these chüeh conforms to a late shape in the life of the type: a bag-shaped body is mounted over thin saber-like legs—one splayed dramatically—and the vessel has a large pouring spout and full tail. Vessels from the Yin-hsü IV phase often exhibit these features.² The jaw, foot, ear,

and brow of the animal mask appear as curling, narrow, flat bands amid a fine tracery of ground spirals. Eyes and flanges rise in low relief from this field of ornament. The small caps—rendered as whorls with central nipples—atop each post are common in earlier vessels. The animal head in relief has much in common with the chüeh no. 7, as do these caps.

These chüeh carry a mottled pattern of so-called water patina; the pattern is characterized by cloudy gray areas against a lustrous black background, and the patina results from the high tin content in the alloy. Each vessel exhibits a common casting flaw on half the animal mask on the front side, opposite the handle. A vertical band transecting the horn, eye, and jaw appears to have been rubbed down to the same surface level as the body proper. This feature may have resulted if the outer piece molds for the two vessels were made from a single master model that was not properly carved or was incomplete at this point. Thus, both molds would have created an incomplete pattern and transferred that to the cast vessel. It is certainly possible that models were used to make many sets of molds in the large foundries at Anyang.

The inscription cast in the area within each strap handle shows a pictograph of a fish or similar creature that is conventionally called a clan emblem. Both vessels were dedicated to the same “Father Hsin.” The spurious inscription on one post of chia no. 1 has the same dedication.

1. Kwang-chih Chang, *Shang Civilization* (New Haven, 1980), p. 85.

2. *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1979/1, pls. 13, 15. See also *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1980/4, p. 460, for an example from the Feng-hsi site.



11 FANG-TING FOOD VESSEL

Late Shang–Early Western Chou period,
11th century B.C.

Height: 8 in. (20.3 cm.)

Inscription undeciphered

A rectangular box supported by tall, columnar legs, this fang-ting is one of a family of vessels of the Late Shang or Early Western Chou period. Members of this group are characterized by a common order of decoration: narrow bands across the top of the body are filled with a bifurcated serpent and disks; the lower portion is covered by rows of bosses surrounding an open, rectangular panel. Large bovine masks wrap around the top of each leg above a pair of bowstrings. This general scheme for decorating a rectangular ting was already established by the Upper Erh-li-kang phase with the appearance of the earliest fang-ting vessels. The consistency of the decoration adopted for these Late Shang or Early Western Chou fang-ting seems to indicate that there was a compelling rationale that guided the designs, at least something more than ad hoc decisions made

by foundry workers.

A vessel remarkably similar to the fang-ting was unearthed in 1975 at Pai-lung Village in Fu-feng County, Shensi, and bears the inscription *hou ssu k'ang*, which has been interpreted as the name of a Shang royal consort. Another similar vessel in the Art Museum, Princeton University, bears a clan sign known on Late Shang vessels.¹ A related fang-ting in the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C., has a heavier appearance, with thicker flanges and spurs, flanges on the masks at the leg, and grooves in the handles. The Freer example is one of a group dated by their inscriptions to the reign of the third Chou king, K'ang Wang.² With its less-developed features, the Morse vessel can be tentatively assigned to the end of Shang or early years of Western Chou.

1. *Bronzes of the Shang and Chou Unearthed in Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1979), vol. I, no. 51; Eleanor von Erdberg, *Chinese Bronzes from the Collection of Chester Dale and Dolly Carter* (Ascona, Switzerland, 1978), no. 18.

2. John A. Pope et al., *The Freer Chinese Bronzes, Catalogue* (Washington, 1967), no. 34; *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1956/1, pp. 84–86.



12 LI-TING FOOD VESSEL

Early Western Chou period, 11th century B.C.
Height: 8¾ in. (22 cm.)

The hybrid name “li-ting” was the Chinese antiquarian’s way of recognizing what we here term a mode. In this instance, the ting has been given a tripartite body like a li tripod. The fang-ting (no. 11) represents another mode of the ting type. Many modes existed within the repertoire of functional types, each with its own history and individual traits.

Compact and well suited to being grasped with two hands, this li-ting is decorated by large animal masks centered over the columnar legs, as if the legs were pendant from the snouts. The mask, horns, and pair of dragons standing on their heads at the sides of each panel are rendered as smooth areas in very low relief. A black deposit fills the ground spirals and sets off the main motifs.

Li-ting of this variety were extremely numerous during the Late Shang and Early Western Chou periods, and examples have been excavated from widely distributed sites. A slightly earlier stage in the evolution of the mode is represented at Anyang, where a specimen from Hsi-pei-kang

Tomb 2020 may be dated to the Yin-hsü IV phase.¹ That vessel exhibits the basic elements of this mode, such as the band of spirals around the neck and the almost flat base. The Anyang li-ting, however, has relief elements in a fashion analogous to the ku (no. 8), rather than the coherent and smoothly rendered mask seen on the Morse vessel. Moreover, the Anyang specimen lacks the standing dragons at the end of each panel. The earliest vessels that correspond to the Morse li-ting in all particulars are dated to the reign of the second Chou king, Ch’eng Wang. Vessels of precisely this kind have been found among the Early Western Chou graves at the Feng-hsi sites near Sian.²

The Western Chou tombs near Sian reveal that it was the Chou custom to place a ting and a kuei together in a grave, an assemblage not found in Shang burials. This emphasis on meat and grain vessels would accord with the traditional view that the Chou loathed the drunkenness of the debauched Shang rulers.

1. Li Chi, *Studies of the Bronze Ting-Cauldron* (in Chinese; Nankang, 1970), pl. 24.

2. *K’ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1955/10, pp. 118–19; *K’ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1980/4, p. 462.



13 KUEI FOOD VESSEL

Early Western Chou period, 11th century B.C.

Height: 6 in. (15.2 cm.)

Inscription: *tso pao yi*, "made this precious sacrificial vessel"

Some writers prefer to reserve the name "kuei" for vessels like this one, with two or four handles mounted on the sides of the bowl. The inscription cast in the vessel, however, uses the generic term *yi*. A kuei contemporary with the Morse vessel and other types excavated at Lo-yang employ the term "fu" for vessels we would name "lei," "li," "hu," and "kuei."¹ These inscriptions suggest that the original categories used to name the ritual vessels do not always correspond to our own.

Kuei with handles became common only in Late Shang, although an excavated example datable to the Upper Erh-li-kang phase is known. The Morse vessel is representative of a large family of kuei that was popular during the Late Shang and Early Western Chou periods. A bulging bowl sits on a relatively high ring foot; while the angle of the foot is raked slightly inward, that of the rim flares out sharply. In contrast to the earlier kuei with animal-mask decoration (no. 6), this vessel limits surface embellishment to bands at the foot and neck, a severe style akin to that of the wine vessel no. 15. The motifs employed are old fash-

ioned, especially the square with crescents that, as Max Loehr has pointed out, can be seen on Erh-li-kang-phase pottery from Chengchow.² The cervine heads on the handles, however, are a motif typical of the period in which the vessel was made. The dragons on the foot of this kuei are akin to those seen on the foot and neck of the fang-lei (no. 3) and provide more evidence for the view that some early motifs persisted even in times of great experimentation such as the Early Western Chou period.

The date of the Morse kuei can be established by comparisons with excavated and datable examples. A kuei from a Hsi-peï-kang tomb dated to the Yin-hsü IV phase probably predates the Morse example; it bears a Shang clan sign.³ The Ch'in kuei dated to the reign of the second Chou king, Ch'eng Wang, corresponds in most respects to the Morse vessel, although the decoration of the neck band does differ. Kuei of this mode with moldings on the ring feet are generally dated to the Middle Western Chou period.⁴

1. *Wenwu*, 1972/10, p. 28.

2. Max Loehr, *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China* (New York, 1968), no. 22.

3. Li Chi, *Studies of Fifty-Three Ritual Bronze Vessels* (in Chinese; Nankang, 1972), pl. 17.

4. *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1955/10, pp. 73-76; *Bronzes of the Shang and Chou Unearthed in Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1979), vol. I, no. 159.



14 KUEI FOOD VESSEL

Early Western Chou period,
11th–10th centuries B.C.
Height: 6½ in. (16.5 cm.)

Like the previous example (no. 13), this kuei has a pair of loop handles with cervine heads and pendants. An earlier form of the mode represented here can be seen in the Late Shang kuei no. 6. Vessels with unadorned relief motifs are an important current in bronze decoration in the Shang-Chou transition and Early Western Chou periods. Max Loehr, in his treatment of Anyang styles, designated this decoration Style V-c, noting that logically it should be the latest of the relief styles.¹ This fashion of relief decoration may have arisen during the Shang period, but the rendering of the masks that dominate the belly of this kuei are characteristic of the Early Western Chou period. Large-scale animal masks appear on some of the most famous vessels of the period, such as the Li kuei.² The style established by such important works as the Li kuei probably enhanced the popularity of this motif at the time.

A plausible date for the Morse kuei may be adduced from the Shih Chih kuei in the Palace Museum, Peking, and its excavated mate from Ch'i-shan in Shensi.³ Both are thought to have been produced in the twelfth year of the third Chou king, K'ang Wang. The Morse vessel should probably be dated to the same reign.

1. Max Loehr, "The Bronze Styles of the Anyang Period (1300–1028 B.C.)," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 7 (1953), p. 48.

2. Wen Fong, ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China* (New York, 1980), no. 41.

3. K'ao-ku, 1972/5, p. 46; *Bronzes of the Shang and Chou Unearthed in Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1979), vol. I, no. 152.



15 HO WINE VESSEL

Early Western Chou period,
11th–10th centuries B.C.
Height: 12½ in. (31.6 cm.)

The earliest bronze ho are dated to the Erh-li-kang phase, but discoveries of clay ho at Erh-li-t'ou raise the possibility that this type predates the Early Shang period. Late Shang ho are rarer than vessels of the earlier period and seem to have been produced in several modes. One mode known from excavations at Anyang consists of an egg-shaped body atop three short, columnar legs with a spout protruding from the body rather than from the lid as on the earliest examples. Another mode from Anyang has legs of triangular section like a mature chüeh and bears a strap handle opposite the spout. (The two preceding modes may be roughly contemporaneous.) Further developed, the latter mode gave rise to the vessel we see here; a ho in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, probably represents an intermediate stage.¹

The Morse ho stands on three solid legs that merge with the elongated body as high arches. The handle with buffalo head is positioned over one leg, while the spout protrudes

from the neck band on the opposite side. A single link that fastens the lid to the body is a modern replacement. While the shape of the ho is characteristic of the Early Western Chou period, its decoration—two narrow bands of spirals with relief eyes and paired chevron lines on the body—is more typical of an earlier period. This severe fashion in bronze decoration has been viewed both as a reaction to the more florid ornament common in the Shang and Early Western Chou periods and as a continuation of earlier traditions; both views have merit.

A vessel virtually identical to the ho displayed here was taken from a tomb at Pai-ts'ao-p'o in Ling-t'ai County, Kansu. That ho was part of an assemblage made for an earl of Luan. Its excavators date the Kansu ho to the reign of the third Chou king, K'ang Wang, and we follow that dating here.²

1. Li Chi, *Studies of Fifty-Three Ritual Bronze Vessels* (in Chinese; Nankang, 1972), pl. 47; Max Loehr, *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China* (New York, 1968), no. 11; Aschwin Lippe, "A Gift of Chinese Bronzes," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 9/4 (December 1950), p. 98; *The Tomb of Fu Hao at Yin-hsü* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pls. 39, 40.

2. Wen Fong, ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China* (New York, 1980), no. 44.



16 YU WINE CONTAINER

Early Western Chou period, 10th century B.C.

Height: 6¾ in. (17 cm.)

Inscription: (undeciphered name?) *ts'ung yi*

The hu and yu wine containers initially had the same body shape, augmented in the latter case by a bronze bail handle. Their parallel development continued in the Late Shang with the creation of vessels with an elongated oval section.¹ While full-surface decoration dominated, yu with bare surfaces are also known throughout the life of the type. The Morse yu falls into this category. In section, the vessel is a somewhat squared oval, like the tsun (no. 17). The sagging profile and spurs at each end of the lid echo, however faintly, earlier developments such as the double-owl mode. Bare surfaces predominate, narrow bands at the neck and atop the lid providing the only embellishment. There is a crude, profile-dragon motif on either side of the animal

head in relief; the curls in front of each dragon resemble disengaged trunks. Rams' heads in the round, common at this period, terminate each end of the bail. These heads are rendered much like the head on a ram-shaped vessel from a Western Chou tomb near Pao-chi in Shensi.²

Yu with plain surfaces varying only in their bands of decoration were popular in Early Western Chou, with datable examples numerous in the reigns of Ch'eng Wang and K'ang Wang. The Morse yu, with its relatively tall shape and high lid, probably dates to the latter reign. Excavated specimens of this shape are known from Pao-chi and Fu-feng in Shensi.³ Many inscribed yu seem to have been made as pairs with tsun.

1. Wen Fong, ed., *The Great Bronze Age of China* (New York, 1980), nos. 25, 31.

2. *Wenwu*, 1976/4, p. 42.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 48, fig. 6; *Wenwu*, 1979/11, p. 8, fig. 11.



17 TSUN WINE VESSEL

Early Western Chou period, 10th century B.C.

Height: 8 in. (20.3 cm.)

Inscription: *Chou Wen-p'ang tso fu ting tsung pao*
yi, "Wen-p'ang of Chou made this precious
sacrificial vessel for Father Ting"

Many Western Chou tsun were made as pairs with yu wine containers (no. 16), and often these two types of vessels bear similar inscriptions and decoration. While many tsun of the period have a round section, the Morse example has a slightly squared shape. The diameters of the bulging belly and flaring rim are about equal, as are the diameters of the ring foot where it joins the body and the constricted neck. A slack S-curve silhouette and the division of the body into three zones of decoration—foot, belly, and neck—are typical of the period. Addorsed birds on the belly stand out in low relief from the ground spirals, as do the less recognizable forms filling the blades on the neck. As Max Loehr has observed of similar decoration, there is an "assimilation of parts"; the image of the birds "is destined to submerge in a pattern."¹ The designers of this vessel depicted the birds almost as if they were in the process of molting; feathers that would have dropped from the crest plumage are rendered as curls beside the birds' necks. The animal images

that underlie the decoration in the neck zone are so hidden by hooks and curls as to be indistinguishable except for their circular eyes. Two escutcheons affixed below the neck appear to be recent interpolations added in a second casting. A bird of much the same design as those on the belly appears in thin relief lines inside the ring foot.

Similar tsun, both inscribed and excavated, provide clues for dating the Morse vessel. A well-known tsun in the Hakutsuru Museum, Kobe, shares many of the features of our example, including the less coherent motifs on the neck. The Hakutsuru tsun is usually dated to the latter part of the Early Western Chou period, during the reign of K'ang Wang. Another tsun from a cache at Chuang-po in Fu-feng County, Shensi, is dated to the Middle Western Chou period, during the reign of Mu Wang, but retains readable bird images in the neck zone.² From the available evidence, it appears that the dissolution of traditional imagery was not a steady trend, but rather a sporadic development during the Early and Middle Western Chou.

1. Max Loehr, *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China* (New York, 1968), no. 52.

2. *Chinese Bronzes in the Hakutsuru Museum* (in Japanese; Hyogo, 1934), no. 9; *K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao*, 1956/3, pp. 112-13; *Bronzes of the Shang and Chou Unearthed in Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), vol. II, no. 18.



18 KUEI FOOD VESSEL

Middle–Late Western Chou period,
10th–9th centuries B.C.

Height: 9 in. (22.8 cm.)

Inscription: *San Po tso Nieh Chi pao kuei ch'i wan nien yung chung*, "The Earl of San made this precious kuei for (Lady?) Chi of Nieh for eternal use"

This vessel is one of a group of five kuei and an yi unearthed in the late nineteenth century near Feng-hsiang in Shensi Province. One of these kuei is now in the Shanghai Museum; another is in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University.¹ The four other examples of kuei in the Morse collection (nos. 5, 6, 13, 14) illustrate earlier stages in the kuei's typological evolution. The kuei was one of the most durable and important types of ritual paraphernalia. Chou ritual treatises describe the important sacrifices performed in the ancestral temples in terms of the number of ting and kuei required. Moreover, social rank determined the number of ting and kuei placed in a burial; the Son of Heaven was entitled to nine ting and eight kuei, but lesser-ranking nobles were allotted fewer vessels.

By the Middle and Late Western Chou periods, kuei with loop handles and attached rings supported by a ring base with three feet were common. Stylized dragon heads featuring snail-curl horns had by this time largely supplanted

the cervine heads that were popular earlier (see nos. 13, 14). One of the most common families of kuei in this period combines the horizontal fluting seen on this example with bands of decoration on the lid and at the neck. As Laurence Sickman has noted, the Morse vessel derives its "particular quality of style and elegant restraint from the simple treatment of the body and lid, which are without ornament, but modeled in a series of deep, parallel grooves or furrows. . . . The device is used here to great advantage in giving a rhythmic and lively play of light and shade over the surface."¹

An inscription cast both in the lid and body of this kuei names an earl of San ("San Po"). In 1960, a peasant cutting hay near Chuang-po in Fu-feng County, Shensi, came upon a cache of nineteen vessels, including four ting, five kuei, and two hu—all of which bore inscriptions that referred to the state of San.² While the kuei in this cache resemble the Morse vessel in their general shape, they incorporate bands of decoration as well. The Morse kuei, like those from the Chuang-po cache, should be dated to the Middle or Late Western Chou period.

1. For the early history of these vessels, see Laurence Sickman, "The Kuei of the Prince of San," *Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum* 9/2 (March 1940), pp. 28–34; *Bronze Vessels in the Shanghai Museum* (in Chinese; Shanghai, 1964), vol. II, p. 52.

2. *Wenwu*, 1972/6, pp. 30–32.

19 CHUNG BELL

Middle-Late Western Chou period,
10th–9th centuries B.C.

Height: 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (25 cm.)

Inscription: *Cheng Ching-shu tso ling chung yung chung/mi* (?), “Ching-shu of Cheng made this numinous bell to be used forever”

Chimes of bells (*pien-chung*) were an important aspect of Chou bronze production. They were used in musical accompaniment for ritual ceremonies and for other less solemn occasions. The Morse bell is referred to as a “chung” in its inscription; “chung” is both the generic term for musical bells and the name of the type seen here. The chung has a shank for suspension, a flaring, elliptical body, and a scalloped bottom rim. The bell was suspended by a ring at the base of the shank and hung at an angle when mounted to a stand as part of a chime. The chung bells can produce two different tones, depending on where they are struck. Usually, Chinese bells were struck with a wooden mallet in the center of the lower register, the zone decorated here with two panels of rather scrambled dragons’ heads; another tone sounds when the bell is hit on the lower register off center to left or right.

The inscription refers to a person named Ching-shu of the state of Cheng (in modern-day Honan Province). In *The Analects*, Confucius condemned the music of Cheng: “Banish the songs of Cheng, and keep far from specious talkers. The songs of Cheng are licentious; specious talkers are dangerous.”¹ Thus, “the songs of Cheng” became synonymous with licentious conduct.

The single graph, read *pin*, to the left of the striking point, may denote the tone this bell produced, according to the musical scale adopted by the state of Cheng. In the twelve-note sequence of fixed pitches most common during the Eastern Chou period, *jui-pin* was the seventh note; if we assume that the first note in this sequence corresponds to middle C, *jui-pin* would correspond to F-sharp. This identification is conditional upon the reading of the last graph in the cartouche as *mi* and as synonymous in this context with *jui*. It should be noted that in the chime from the tomb of Marquis Yi of Tseng, the names on each bell correspond to the European solmization syllables and indicate intervals rather than a specific pitch.² The precise meaning of the graph *pin* here requires further research.

Two chimes excavated in recent years indicate a probable date for the Morse chung. Both the Cha and Chung-yi chimes from Shensi share the general features of shape and decoration evident on the Morse chung, including the two-headed dragons in the bands between the rows of conical bosses that flank the inscription.³ Both chimes are dated to the Middle or Late Western Chou period. Each of these chimes consisted of eight bells ranging in overall height from about eight to twenty inches (twenty to fifty centimeters). At ten inches in height, the Morse bell is the same size as the second bell of each chime.



1. James Legge, trans., *Confucian Analects*, in *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong, rpt., 1960), vol. I, p. 298.

2. *Wenwu*, 1979/7, pp. 34–37; Robert L. Thorp, “The Sui Xian Tomb: Rethinking the Fifth Century,” *Artibus Asiae* 43 (1982), pp. 67–110.

3. *Bronzes of the Shang and Chou Unearthed in Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), vol. II, nos. 142–49, 156–63.



20, 21 PAIR OF HU WINE VESSELS

Late Western Chou period,

9th–8th centuries B.C.

Height: 21 3/4 in. (55 cm.)

Inscription: *Wei*

In a 1968 catalogue for Asia House, New York, Max Loehr described the Morse hu as follows:

These monumental vessels, of flattened pear-shape, bulge above the molded feet, and taper toward the tall, straight necks. The lid of each vessel is surmounted by a ring like an inverted foot ring, on which the molding of the actual foot ring is repeated. The belly is decorated with heavy, rounded, relief figures on plain ground, set in panels formed by flat relief bands. These relief bands run horizontally and vertically, like a harness, crossing in the center of each of the four sides. Diamonds in high relief mark the crossings; above and below them are halved diamonds. There are eight panels in all, filled with disconnected and greatly distorted T'ao-t'ieh elements. At the lower part of the neck runs a band divided into four sections and filled with vaguely zoomorphous figures, each with an eye in the center of two loops. The upper part of the neck is bare. Similar zoomorphs, shaped like recumbent S-figures with an eye in the middle, appear on the lid. These figures are not arranged symmetrically, but in a continuous procession. Strong loop handles with movable disks are placed at the level of the neck band. Sculptured animal heads constructed of curvilinear forms adorn the handles. From their muzzles sally forth flattish, trunk-like, upcurved extensions with tiny, spurred flanges in front.¹

To this we may add that the top of each lid bears decoration similar to that of the eight main panels on the body. The numerous holes near the rims of these hu are the result of gas bubbles trapped in the molten bronze.

This pair of hu is similar in decoration to four other examples. The simplest of these is the Kuo Chi-shih Tzu-tsu hu (current location unknown), which lacks a lid, has a scalloped pattern applied around the ring foot, and has simpler handles and rings than the Morse pair. A pair of hu taken from an Early Eastern Chou cache near Lin-t'ung in Shensi are again quite close to the Morse vessels in scale and decoration, but they have a wave design at the neck and simpler handles, which resemble the stylized dragon heads with snail-curl horns seen on the Morse kuei no. 18. The last and most elaborate of the four hu is in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco. In addition to designs applied at the neck, this vessel has a lid with a crown in the wave pattern and a recumbent buffalo as a knob.² Kuo Mo-jo dated the Kuo Chi-shih hu to the Late Western Chou period, and we agree with that opinion.

1. Max Loehr, *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China* (New York, 1968), no. 58.

2. Jung Keng, *A Comprehensive Study of Shang and Chou Ritual Vessels* (in Chinese; Peking, 1941), no. 729; *Wenwu*, 1977/8, p. 1; René d'Argencé, *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection* (San Francisco, 1977), pl. 43; Kuo Mo-jo, *The Great Corpus of Bronze Texts of the Two Chou Dynasties: Illustrations and Critical Examination* (in Chinese; Tokyo, 1934), fig. 185 and p. 246.

22 WATER-BUFFALO STAND

Late Western Chou–Early Eastern Chou period,
8th century B.C.
Length: 10¼ in. (26 cm.)

This docile water buffalo is one member of the small corpus of Western Chou sculpture in bronze. The socket on its back indicates that it probably served as a stand or foot for some object. The buffalo has been modeled with the most summary and generalized features, for example, a simple conical neck, and musculature at the shoulders rendered merely as spirals. There is little articulation of body parts, although the features of the head are more detailed. S-shape grooves cover the body.

The Morse buffalo stand is one of a group of at least five such stands known from various catalogues. A buffalo that was included in a C. T. Loo catalogue, published in 1924, may be a mate to the Morse stand. Three other examples—one of which is now in the Pillsbury Collection at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts—are buffalo that face left, but they differ in other minor details.¹

Two other small animal sculptures of similar function—one depicting a buffalo and the other a rhinoceros (or a mythical horned beast?)—were among the rich furnishings in a tomb of the state of Chung-shan at P'ing-shan, Hopei.² The figures are inlaid with gold and silver and have long tails. Like the Morse buffalo, they stand with their weight shifted backward and have sockets on their backs. The Chung-shan tombs are dated to the Warring States era.

Only an approximate dating for the Morse buffalo can be suggested at this time. A horse from Mei County in Shensi and the bizarre animal-shaped tou from Shan County in Honan are both dated to the Late Western or Early Eastern Chou period.³ While they illustrate that animal sculptures of this type were current during that period, there is no other evidence to suggest a more precise date for the water buffalo group.

1. Teh'ou To-yi [sic], *Bronzes antiques de la Chine appartenant a C. T. Loo et Cie* (Paris, 1924), pl. 19; Bernhard Karlgren, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Bronzes in the Charles F. Pillsbury Collection* (Minneapolis, 1952), no. 90; Sueji Umehara, *A Selection of Ancient Chinese Bronzes in European and American Collections* (in Japanese; Osaka, 1933), vol. VI, no. 1; Huang Chün, *Bronzes from the Tsun-ku Studio* (in Chinese; Peking, 1936), vol. III, p. 24a.

2. *Wenwu*, 1979/1, pl. 4; *Exhibition of Artifacts from the Chung-shan Kings* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1981), pls. 19, 20.

3. Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), nos. 65, 67, 68.





23 HU WINE VESSEL

Early Warring States period, 5th century B.C.
Height: 12½ in. (31.6 cm.)

Hu wine vessels were among the most durable and versatile types of bronze vessels. Probably modeled after ceramic prototypes, bronze hu were popular by the Late Shang period and survived throughout the Bronze Age. The Morse vessel stands on a ring foot that is about one-third larger in diameter than the mouth. The round body carries five tiers of relief decoration in a dense, repeated pattern of dragon heads accented with raised dots. A handle consisting of a central grip and eight links is attached to animal-mask escutcheons at the shoulder. Four diminutive inverted animal masks at the neck hold small rings. There are also two bands of less noticeable flat decoration below the lowest band of relief and a flat pattern on the ring foot. The two flat bands on the body consist of dragons' heads in a frieze

and in petals respectively, while the flat pattern on the foot is an interlocking spiral motif.

Hu with handles of this kind were widely used in the early Warring States period, and excavated examples are known from both north and south China. A hu from Lo-yang differs from the Morse vessel only in the number of links in the handle and the density of the raised dots in the decoration; the Lo-yang hu can be dated to the early Warring States period.¹ Excavated hu from Hopei and Kwang-tung vary in details, but like the Lo-yang hu they have been assigned to the early Warring States period.²

1. *Lo-yang, Chung-chou Road, West Work Section* (in Chinese; Peking, 1959), pl. 64; Kuo Mo-jo, *The Great Corpus of Bronze Texts of the Two Chou Dynasties: Illustrations and Critical Examination* (in Chinese; Tokyo, 1934), fig. 193, pp. 227-28.

2. *Wenwu*, 1978/2, p. 96; *A Selection of Cultural Relics Unearthed in Hopei Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), no. 114; *Wenwu*, 1974/11, p. 71.



Tomb Ceramics: The Spirit of the Living

VIRGINIA BOWER

In addition to their revelations about bronzes, recent archaeological discoveries have illuminated the history of Chinese ceramics. Excavations of Neolithic habitations in Kansu Province, for example, have uncovered a type of urn that was once thought to be reserved exclusively for burials,¹ and the astonishing life-size pottery "army" found near the tomb of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti, the first emperor of the Ch'in dynasty, has revealed that the scale of funerary ceramic sculpture was grander than previously imagined.²

The ceramics from the Morse collection fall into two categories: a large group of earthenware figurines made expressly for placement in graves; and a smaller group of earthenware vessels, frequently found in, but not necessarily made for, graves. Unfortunately, as is the case with most Chinese antiquities in collections outside China, nothing specific is known about the provenance of these objects. They came out of China before the People's Republic began to oversee archaeological excavations in 1950. Ceramics like the figurines and vessels in the Morse collection were originally acquired from dealers who knew little about the origin of the objects.³ Now that a number of tombs have been excavated and dated to the sixth through eighth centuries A.D., these objects can be dated more precisely. There is also more information on the placement, number, and type of figurines and vessels found in tombs. Investigations of habitation and kiln sites have also proven valuable, particularly in revealing the use and manufacture of the three-color ware that was so popular during the T'ang period.

All the ceramics from the Morse collection are made of earthenware, rather than stoneware or porcelain. In contrast to stoneware and porcelain, which are high fired and vitrified, earthenware is low fired and nonvitrified. If glazes are used, they must be ones that flux at relatively low temperatures when fired. Most of the ceramic objects in the Morse collection had both painted and glazed decoration, though, in many cases, little evidence of the unfired ("cold") pigments remains. Whether they were painted, glazed, or both, all the objects appear to have been coated with a slip, a fluid suspension of clay, before firing, to provide a "clean" ground for subsequent decoration.

All the pieces in this collection were made, at least in part, in molds. On the whole, the artists avoided the uniformity that usually characterizes mold-made objects by varying the arrangement of molded sections and the painted decoration and glaze. Hand modeling of the face, hands, and other features has enhanced the individuality of some objects. (Extensive hand modeling has been used on the figure of a camel ridden by a foreigner, no. 45). Tomb figures constructed of several sections, whether mold made or hand modeled, were made as early as the Ch'in dynasty, but during the succeeding Han dynasty figurines were most often made in two-section molds. Molds of a single piece were favored during the Northern Wei dynasty. Figurines made from multisection molds became popular in later periods, though simple vessels and figurines continued to be made from only two molded sections. The seams where the molds were joined are often visible, as on the phoenix ewer (no. 53).⁴

1. Clarence F. Shangraw, *Origins of Chinese Ceramics* (New York, 1978), p. 28.

2. Maxwell K. Hearn, "The Terracotta Army of the First Emperor of Qin (221–206 B.C.)," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. by Wen Fong (New York, 1980), pp. 353–73.

3. Jan Fontein and Tung Wu, *Unearthing China's Past* (Boston, 1973), pp. 14–18.

4. *Kaogu yu Wenwu*, 1980/3, pp. 108–119, 24; Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977) 1:48–49, 53–59; Margaret Medley, *T'ang Pottery and Porcelain* (London, 1981), pp. 26–34, 46–49.

The following survey introduces the important critical, technical, and social developments in the history of Chinese earthenware before the sixth century A.D. Earthenware appeared in China as early as the sixth millennium B.C.⁵ Certain techniques invented during the Neolithic period were still being used in the sixth century—for example, the use of slip. Already, too, a belief in an afterlife dictated the placement of pottery in graves—a custom that would persist into the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. Some painted basins from Pan-p'o-ts'un in Shensi Province seem to have been made solely for funerary purposes. The figurines of dogs found at Ta-wen-k'ou in Shantung Province were, perhaps, very early examples of tomb figurines.⁶

The use of cold pigments for decoration was apparently introduced during the Shang dynasty. White-colored earthenware, which had already appeared in the Neolithic period, was used to make elaborately carved and impressed vessels during the Shang, but then seems to have disappeared until the sixth century A.D.⁷

In the Early Shang period, it seems that only animals were sacrificed and placed in graves. Human sacrifice was practiced during the Middle Shang period. Eventually, tomb figurines were used as surrogates. By the Ch'in-Han period, surrogate images appear to have been widely used. However, both pottery figurines and the remains of human and animal sacrifices have been found in at least one Eastern Han tomb, demonstrating the persistence of the old custom.⁸

Ming-ch'i (literally, "spirit objects"), is the term most often used to describe the objects placed in the tomb for the "use" of the deceased. This term first appears in Late Chou texts and refers to figurines of people and animals, models of buildings and tools, and replicas of objects that were originally made of valuable materials such as bronze. Objects used in "real life"—such as jewels or a favorite lamp—were also placed in graves, but are not usually considered *ming-ch'i*.⁹ Although ceramic objects, such as the crude replicas of bronze vessels found in Shang tombs, might be regarded as *ming-ch'i*, vessels clearly intended for funerary use did not appear widely until the Warring States period of the Eastern Chou dynasty. Some of the vessels of this era are made of earthenware so soft as to have been impractical for daily use. Others, whose forms imitate the ceremonial bronze vessels, might have been used in a ritual preceding burial, since charred animal bones and residue of alcoholic spirits have been found within them.¹⁰

The tomb figurines from the Warring States period are primitive, especially when compared to those made in the succeeding Ch'in and Han dynasties. They have conelike bodies, and their facial features are simple and geometric. Figurines from a fifth-century B.C. site in Shensi Province are slightly more static than those dated to about the same period found in Shantung Province. The Shantung figurines supplemented rather than replaced human sacrifice, since the remains of twenty-six bodies, nine of which were placed on the coffin itself, were also uncovered.¹¹

The evolution of small (5–10 centimeters high), almost abstract figurines, like those discussed above, into large (175–196 centimeters high) lifelike figures found near the tomb of the first emperor of the Ch'in dynasty has yet to be archaeologically documented. These figures, assembled out of both molded and hand-modeled parts, were originally brilliantly painted in unfired (cold) pigments. These Ch'in

5. *Kaogu*, 1981/3, pp. 252–60.

6. Shangraw, *Origins*, pp. 16–37.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–44; Suzanne G. Valenstein, *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics* (New York, 1975), p. 16.

8. Robert L. Thorp, "Burial Practices of Bronze Age China," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. by Wen Fong (New York, 1980), pp. 52–64; *Wenwu*, 1972/2, pp. 55–62.

9. Cheng Te-k'un and Shen Wei-chun, *A Brief History of Chinese Mortuary Objects* (in Chinese; Peking, 1933), pp. 1–10; Derk Bodde, "The Term *Ming'ch'i*," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963), p. 283.

10. Thorp, "Burial Practices," p. 62.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 62–63; *Kaogu Xuebao*, 1977/1, pp. 99–100.

statues are the direct ancestors of the many painted earthenware figurines found in tombs in subsequent dynasties, including the pieces in the Morse collection. Whether the Han emperors attempted to compete with their predecessor in producing so many large-scale earthenware figures will not be known until an imperial Han tomb is excavated.¹²

Lead-glazed earthenware appeared in China as early as the Warring States period, but was not widely used until the Han dynasty. The importance of lead glazing, particularly for the production of *ming-ch'i*, cannot be overestimated: easier and less expensive to produce than high-fired stoneware, lead-glazed earthenware became a popular medium for funerary vessels and figurines.¹³ Whether this technique was an indigenous development or resulted from foreign influences is still unclear.¹⁴

China was united by the first emperor of the Ch'in dynasty and remained united during the Western and Eastern Han dynasties. In the third century A.D. the Eastern Han collapsed, thus beginning a period of disunity called the Six Dynasties. By the early fifth century A.D. the country had settled into two empires, designated Northern and Southern. In the north, the emperors were of foreign origin and included the Toba Turks, who founded the Northern Wei dynasty. These foreigners often intermarried with Chinese. As a result, the imperial families of the "Chinese" dynasties that followed the Wei often had foreign ancestors. In the south, the emperors were of Chinese origin—members of aristocratic families who had fled the north during the "barbarian" invasions. Consequently, the south believed it was the true heir of the Han dynasty and the caretaker of Han (i.e., native Chinese) culture. The complex cultural interactions of the two regions have been the topic of much scholarly research.¹⁵

Little is known of the earthenware tomb figurines of southern China during the Six Dynasties period. Perhaps because locally produced celadon stoneware was very popular in southern China, few earthenware figurines have been found in tombs from this region. Those that have been found are crudely fashioned versions of Han figurines with squat proportions and simple geometric shapes. The discovery of similar pieces in the north shows that this style was not confined to the south, however.¹⁶ The discovery of lead-glazed figurines in the tomb of Ssu-ma Chin-lung, 484 A.D., in Shansi Province, ranks among the most significant recent finds in northern China. Prior to this discovery, there had been no documented archaeological proof that lead glazing continued to be used between the late Han period and the late sixth century A.D.¹⁷ Like their Han predecessors, the figurines from the Ssu-ma Chin-lung tomb appear to be made of dark earthenware that was directly glazed in shades of green and brown and fired. Some figurines are decorated in both colors—representing the earliest dated use of polychrome lead glazing. In style, these horses, camels, and human figures more closely resemble some of the figurines found in southern tombs; the stocky bodies of the human figures are strikingly different from the elongated bodies popular later in the north. However, certain other features, such as the strongly curved necks on the horses and the use of bases, do show up in later Northern Wei figurines. Thus, these figurines are significant not only because they are the sole documented lead-glazed figurines from between the

12. *Kaogu yu Wenwu*, 1980/3, pp. 108–119, 24; Hearn, "The Terracotta Army," pp. 361–68; Thorp, "Burial Practices," pp. 62–63.

13. Valenstein, *Handbook*, pp. 22–23.

14. Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter* (New York, 1976), pp. 50–52. These lead glazes were probably quite toxic and hence unsuited for objects of daily use.

15. Arthur F. Wright, *The Sui Dynasty* (New York, 1978), pp. 1–81; Alexander C. Soper, "South Chinese Influence on the Buddhist Art of the Six Dynasties Period," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 32 (1960), pp. 47–96.

16. Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), pls. 328–41; *Kaogu*, 1959/6, pp. 285–87, pls. 3, 4; Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 1:20–23. Schloss incorrectly assigns this tomb a 523 A.D. date. The report itself concludes that the tomb must date from the Early Northern Wei period (presumably the fifth century).

17. *Wenwu*, 1972/3, pp. 21–35; Medley, *T'ang Pottery and Porcelain*, p. 18. It is possible that the technique of lead glazing had been preserved through its use in the production of roof tiles.



Detail of camel with foreign rider (no. 45), T'ang dynasty (late seventh–first quarter of eighth century A.D.)

Han period and the late sixth century, but also because they provide a date for the emergence of a new style in tomb figurines.¹⁸

Elongated, flattened, and often gently smiling figurines from the Northern Wei dynasty—such as the civil official in the Morse collection (no. 24)—reflect the Buddhist sculpture of the period. This style, which probably prevailed in painting as well as in sculpture, may have originated in the south.¹⁹ Generally, Northern Wei figurines were made of molded gray earthenware, covered with slip, and painted, rather than glazed. In addition to figurines depicting officials, such as no. 24, the typical Northern Wei tomb contained guardians, mounted and foot soldiers, camels, and musicians. Some forms, such as the camel, which later became quite popular, appear to have originated during the Northern Wei dynasty.

About the middle of the sixth century A.D. a new style of representing the body appeared in both Buddhist sculpture and in tomb figurines. This style, sometimes called “columnar,” is characterized by more three-dimensional modeling and natural body proportions than those of the frontally oriented figures of the Northern, Eastern, and Western Wei dynasties. It is possible that the stimulus for this change again came from the south.²⁰ The two warriors (nos. 25, 26) in the Morse collection exemplify the “columnar” style.

18. *Wenwu*, 1972/3, pp. 21–35, pl. 4:3; *Cultural Relics Unearthed During the Period of the Great Cultural Revolution*, vol. 1 (Peking, 1972), pls. 139–42.

19. Soper, “South Chinese Influence,” pp. 56–81. It is strange that the few southern tomb figurines thus far excavated fail to demonstrate this style.

20. Laurence Sickman and Alexander Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China* (Baltimore, 1971), pp. 111–28.

Lead-glazed vessels found in late-sixth-century A.D. tombs, such as that of Fan Ts'ui, dating to 575 A.D., are extremely important in tracing the development of T'ang three-color ware. Unlike the darker lead-glazed wares of earlier periods, these sixth-century vessels were generally made of light-colored earthenware that better set off the colors of their glazes.²¹

During the Sui dynasty (581–618 A.D.), China was once again united. The capital was established near modern-day Sian, and this city, known as Ch'ang-an during the T'ang dynasty, functioned as the main capital throughout most of the Sui and T'ang dynasties. At times, Loyang, usually a subsidiary capital, was designated as the main capital. Both cities had large populations; Ch'ang-an, with more than a million inhabitants, was the largest city in the world at the time. Thus, it is not surprising that most of the tomb figurines and vessels of the Sui and T'ang have been excavated in either the Sian or Loyang area.²²

The cosmopolitan nature of the Sui and T'ang dynasties is reflected in the many tomb figurines from this period that depict foreigners. Throughout much of the period, but especially in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries A.D., the Chinese were enamored of exotica. China's conquests in Central Asia increased the availability and influence of products and customs from this area and from points farther west, particularly Sogdia and the Sasanian empire. Many foreigners came to China to trade, and some settled there. The imperial families of both the Sui and T'ang dynasties were of mixed blood, and some members were particularly attracted to foreign (non-Chinese) ways. Too few tombs have been excavated to know whether certain officials or merchants would have been more likely than others to include figurines of foreigners in their tombs.²³

Judging from the sculpture and painting of this period, the trend toward more naturalistic forms, which had begun in the late Six Dynasties, continued during the Sui and T'ang dynasties. This development is clearly demonstrated in the tomb figurines in the Morse collection; for example, the eighth-century camel (no. 46) is much more realistically modeled than the camel from the seventh century (no. 45). The stance of the former is not so rigid, and the body appears more lifelike.

As in earlier periods, burials during the T'ang dynasty were regulated according to the social rank of the deceased. Edicts specified both the number and size of figurines accorded to each rank, though it appears that these rules were frequently broken. For example, in the early T'ang period, officials of the highest rank were to have a maximum of ninety figurines, no more than a T'ang foot (a little less than twelve inches) in height. Yet the tomb of the general Hsien-yü T'ing-hui, dating to 723 A.D., despite having been robbed, yielded 120 figurines, many well over a foot tall.²⁴ The tombs of members of the imperial family were generally even more lavishly equipped, often containing several hundred figurines, a few almost three feet tall.²⁵ It is fair to say that extremely large or lavishly decorated pieces

21. *Kaogu yu Wenwu*, 1980/1, pp. 112–13. In earlier reports pieces like this are often referred to as *t'zu*, or stoneware (*Wenwu*, 1972/1, pp. 49–50; *Kaogu*, 1972/1, pp. 45–47). This most recent article indicates that they are earthenware. It is not clear if these vessels were slipped prior to glazing.

22. Denis Twitchett, Introduction in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, pt. 1, *Sui and T'ang China*, ed. by Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 1–29, 133–34, 257–58; for examples of excavated pieces see *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), and *T'ang Three-Color Ware of Loyang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980).

23. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian*, pp. 29–56. People with foreign surnames, such as Tu-ku, do not appear to have appreciably more foreign figurines in their tombs than those with Chinese surnames, such as Chang Shih-kuei (*Kaogu*, 1978/3, pp. 168–78) or Chang Sheng (*Kaogu*, 1959/10, pp. 541–45). In any case, many of the “foreigners,” such as the Tu-ku family, had long been sinicized. For a good account of Sui and T'ang China's relationship with the West, see Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963).

24. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 130–32; Cheng Te-k'un and Shen Wei-chun, *A Brief History*, pp. 55–59; *The Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian*, pp. 58–62.

25. *Wenwu*, 1964/1, pp. 10–12; *Wenwu*, 1972/7, pp. 14–15, 29–30.

such as the camel ridden by a foreigner in the Morse collection (no. 45) are likely to have come from tombs of aristocrats.

It should be pointed out that tomb figurines were intended only for placement in the grave and were not considered works of art. Because the Chinese were hesitant to disregard traditional burial taboos, they did not begin to collect tomb figurines until this century, and then only when inspired by the example of foreign collectors.²⁶

As noted earlier, most tomb figurines of the Sui and T'ang dynasties were made of earthenware, which was red, gray, or light beige in color. The figurines were usually coated with white slip and then glazed or painted, or both. During the Sui and Early T'ang periods, a transparent glaze was frequently applied over the white slip, and painting and gilding were sometimes added. Gradually, colored lead glazes superseded the transparent glazes in popularity. The great age of polychrome lead-glazed figurines occurred during the late seventh century and the first half of the eighth century, although finely painted figurines of both red and light-colored earthenware continued to be made.

Both polychrome and monochrome lead-glazed ceramics of the T'ang dynasty are commonly called T'ang three-color ware (*T'ang san-ts'ai*), though more than three colors were used. Green, brown, amber, and cream are most often encountered; blue is sometimes combined with these, and other colors, such as black, are not unknown. Generally, the cream-colored areas resulted from the application of a transparent glaze. Colored glazes derive their hues from the addition of various oxides such as iron, copper, and cobalt. Blue-glazed objects are relatively rare; some scholars have suggested that this was because the usual coloring agent—cobalt—may have been imported from the West. Although pieces with red bodies are known, T'ang three-color ware most often has a light-colored earthenware body that was further lightened by the application of a white slip. Sherds found at Kung-hsien, the only kiln discovered where T'ang three-color ware appears to have been made, indicate that the earthenware was fired after the application of the white slip, then glazed and fired again. When these techniques originated is still open to question; the earliest dated examples in polychrome appear to be objects from the tomb of Li Feng, buried in 675 A.D.²⁷

In contrast to the three-color figurines, which were undoubtedly intended only for placement in tombs, T'ang lead-glazed vessels were apparently not employed solely as *ming-ch'i*. Certain vessels, which have been described as having sturdier bodies than usual for earthenware, might well have been used by the Chinese in daily life. Foreigners evidently acquired pieces for their own purposes. A number of lead-glazed sherds have been unearthed in Japan. The spout of a lead-glazed phoenix ewer similar to one in the Morse collection (no. 53) was discovered in Egypt.²⁸

It is unlikely that any of the pieces in the Morse collection were made after the mid-eighth century, when the production of three-color ware declined precipitously as a result of the An Lu-shan rebellion and the disorder wrought by decades of foreign invasions. The kilns producing this ware were probably all located in northern China, the area most disrupted, and they seem to have never resumed full production. The excavated unglazed figurines, dating to the second half of the T'ang dynasty, are not nearly so finely constructed as those made earlier. Though tomb figurines and vessels continued to be placed in tombs during the remainder of the T'ang dynasty, and in succeeding dynasties, they fail, in most instances,

26. Fontein and Tung Wu, *Unearthing China's Past*, p. 16.

27. *Zhongyuan Wenwu*, 1981/3, pp. 16–22; *Kaogu yu Wenwu*, 1980/1, pp. 108–14; *Wenwu*, 1972/7, pp. 39, 40, fig. 13; *Kaogu*, 1977/5, p. 321, pl. 9:4–5; see also Penelope Hughs Stanton and Rose Kerr, comp., *Kiln Sites of Ancient China* (London, 1981), pp. 80–81, for more references. A blue-glazed fragment from a jar found in the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, buried in 664 A.D., is, according to *Kaogu yu Wenwu*, identical to the blue seen on typical three-color ware.

28. Medley, *T'ang Pottery and Porcelain*, pp. 24, 26; *Wenwu*, 1964/1, pp. 14–15; Masahiko Sato, Gakuji Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art of the World*, vol. 11, *Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1976), p. 253, pls. 235–37. These later lead glazes may have been less toxic and thus more suitable for daily use than those of earlier periods.



Phoenix. Detail of ewer (no. 53), T'ang dynasty (late seventh–first half of eighth century A.D.)

to equal the quality of the objects manufactured earlier.²⁹

Taken as a whole, the ceramics in the Morse collection provide a good introduction to Chinese mortuary ceramics, particularly those of the Sui-T'ang era. The colorfully glazed vessels suggest the wide range of other earthenware objects once placed in tombs. In addition to the most important types of tomb figurines, the collection includes some truly unusual pieces, such as the seated lady reading a book (no. 29) and the camel ridden by a foreigner (no. 45). The ceramics seen here not only reveal the innovative techniques and artistry developed by Chinese potters, but also illustrate how belief in an afterlife stimulated the arts in ancient China.

29. *Kaogu yu Wenwu*, 1980/1, p. 113; *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), p. 6, pls. 109–22; Ch'en Wan-li, *Tomb Figurines* (in Chinese; Peking, 1957), p. 8, pls. 76–84; *Wenwu*, 1979/4, pp. 6–9, pls. 3, 4; *Wenwu*, 1979/4, pp. 10–22, pls. 5, 6.



Northern Wei dynasty, early 6th century A.D.
 Painted earthenware
 Height: 34½ in. (87.6 cm.)

Clothed in a full jacket and voluminous trousers, this attenuated figure rests his clasped hands on the handle of a long sword. The long sleeves of his jacket fall in scalloped folds, and a rectangular leather breastplate is buckled over the jacket.¹ The figure is portrayed with a beatific smile. His head, on which he wears a small courtier's cap, is bent slightly forward. The back is unfinished and was originally flat; the support there now is a later addition. Much red pigment can be seen on the gray earthenware body.

The close resemblance between figurines such as this one and the painted images at the entrance to a late-fifth-to-early-sixth-century tomb at Teng-hsien in Honan suggests that these unusually large figures may be "tomb guardians." Although excavation reports of such Northern Wei dynasty tombs as that of Yüan Shao, dating to 528 A.D., usually identify smaller figurines similar to this as civil officials,² it is possible that this figurine was originally placed against a wall to function as a door guardian like the painted figures.³ Regardless of the figure's function, its size alone suggests that it was designed for the tomb of someone of high rank.⁴

One of the most distinctive features of the Morse figurine—the stylized way the sleeves of the jacket fall in scalloped folds—may also be observed in some of the Teng-hsien figurines. The Teng-hsien figurines, however, have the squat proportions associated with pieces of southern origin. A similarly attired figurine from the northern tomb of Yüan Shao has the same elongated proportions as the Morse figurine, but lacks the scalloped sleeves.⁵

Closer parallels to this figurine in size and appearance are found in museum collections in the United States. A piece in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts is posed a little differently and lacks a sword, but it shares the distinctive sleeve style and the flat, unfinished back. Even more parallels are seen with a figure in the Avery Brundage collection in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; its only contrasting features are its smaller size and its more precise detailing. The Minneapolis figurine is reported to have come from the entrance of a tomb in Honan Province, and it is quite possible that the Morse figure also came from this area.⁶

This figurine's elongated body, gentle smile, and shallow, almost two-dimensional form resemble Buddhist sculpture of the Northern Wei period. Were it clothed differently, the civil official could easily be a votive image. Links like this between the "fine" and "applied" arts can also be observed in the correspondences between T'ang wall paintings and T'ang figurines, and these will be discussed later.

1. Kaogu Xuebao, 1976/2, pp. 62–65. This kind of armor, known as *liang-tang k'ai*, meaning "two-sided armor," was particularly popular in the Northern Wei period.

2. Annette L. Juliano, *Art of the Six Dynasties* (New York, 1975), pp. 49–50; Kaogu, 1973/4, p. 219, fig. 4:1.

3. Somewhat similar are the stamped tile designs of figures found at the back of the north wall of the Teng-hsien tomb. Annette L. Juliano, *Teng-Hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb* (Switzerland, 1980), pp. 8, 53, figs. 54, 55; see Kaogu, 1973/4, p. 220, fig. 5:1–2 for some small figurines with partially finished backs.

4. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 130–32; Cheng Te-k'un and Shen Wei-chun, *A Brief History of Chinese Mortuary Objects* (in Chinese; Peking, 1933), pp. 55–59. These references pertain to the T'ang dynasty, but the concept of graded perquisites in burials dates back to at least the Eastern Chou dynasty; see Robert L. Thorp, "Burial Practices of Bronze Age China," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. by Wen Fong (New York, 1980), p. 59.

5. Juliano, *Teng Hsien*, pp. 61–65, fig. 138; Kaogu, 1973/4, p. 219, fig. 4:1.

6. "Chinese Tomb Figures of the Wei Dynasty," *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts* 21:10 (1932), pp. 49–50; René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, ed., *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture* (Tokyo, 1974), pp. 122–23, no. 51. If these pieces do all come from Honan, it seems likely that they are from a site other than Loyang, which has yet to yield a figurine with this style of sleeve.



25, 26 TWO WARRIORS

Northern Ch'i dynasty, second half of
6th century A.D.
Painted earthenware
Height: 30 in. (76.2 cm.)

These two large armor-clad warriors stand erectly. Their hands—left hand under the heart, right hand low at the side—might once have grasped weapons or standards. Their faces are frowning and masklike; helmets encase their heads. Underneath their plate-metal armor, the warriors wear tunics and baggy trousers tied at the knee. The scale-like armor descending from the shoulder to the elbow was a new development. Assembled from plates of metal, this sturdy form of protection eventually superseded the kind of armor worn by the civil official (no. 24).¹ A surprising amount of pigment and white slip still adheres to the gray earthenware bodies of both statuettes.

Judging from their size, these figurines were probably placed in the tomb of someone of high rank, such as a general or a prefect. Though most tombs included both large and small pieces, the armored warriors were usually the largest figurines within any tomb dating to the Northern Ch'i, Sui, and T'ang dynasties. Normally placed near the entrance to the tomb chamber, as if to "guard" it, these figures appear to incorporate aspects of the demon-exorcising *Fang-hsiang-shih* portrayed in Han funerary art and other elements of popular belief such as the gate gods.²

During the Northern Ch'i and Sui dynasties, such oversized armored warriors were most frequently portrayed with the left hand resting on a large shield. Examples of this type include pieces from the tombs of Fan Ts'ui (dating to 575 A.D.), Ts'ui Ang (dating to 566 or 588 A.D.), Hsu Min-hsing (dating to 584 A.D.), and Kao T'an (dating to 582 A.D.).³ The warrior figurines from the first three tombs are all quite large—ranging from fifty-three to sixty-eight centimeters high—and reflect the high rank of the deceased; while the figurines from the tomb of Kao T'an, who only rose to the rank of country magistrate, are just twenty-nine centimeters high. Among figurines excavated from these sites, a warrior from Ts'ui Ang's tomb most resembles the Morse figurines in its facial expression, but his shoulder armor is rendered as if made of a single piece rather than several plates, and it lacks the armor "scales" that partially cover the arms of the Morse figures. A figurine uncovered from an Eastern Wei tomb, dated to 547 A.D., wears the same kind of armor and appears almost as "columnar" as the Morse warriors, which suggests that the Morse figurines may have been made early in the Northern Ch'i period.⁴

The collection of Ezekiel Schloss includes two warriors with their hands resting on shields. Both were made of red earthenware, unlike the two shown here, which they somewhat resemble. Such a variation in the color of the earthenware may indicate that the objects were originally made in different regions, but it is not unusual to find objects of gray and red earthenware in the same tomb.⁵

1. *Kaogu Xuebao*, 1976/2, pp. 68–81. This type of armor was called *ming-kuang k'ai*, meaning "bright and shining armor."
2. Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 75–138; Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:79–84; but see *Kaogu*, 1963/2, p. 91, for a different view. The literal meaning of *Fang-hsiang-shih* has been the subject of scholarly debate. Bodde's suggestion is "he who scrutinizes [for evil spirits] in many directions."
3. *Wenwu*, 1972/1, pp. 48–50, p. 52, figs. 4–5; *Wenwu*, 1973/11, pp. 28–32, 34, fig. 6; *Wenwu*, 1981/4, pp. 30–32, p. 33, fig. 11; *Wenwu*, 1979/3, pp. 18–22, p. 31, fig. 50.
4. *Kaogu*, 1977/6, p. 392, pl. 8:3. Their facial resemblance to the figure from Ts'ui Ang's tomb may be significant in this regard, assuming that the excavated figurine dates from the 566 A.D. burial of Ts'ui Ang himself rather than the 588 A.D. burial of his wife. See *Wenwu*, 1973/11, pp. 30–32.
5. *Kaogu*, 1977/6, p. 392; *Wenwu*, 1972/1, p. 48; Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 1: 203–204; 2: pls. 58A, 58B.



T'ang dynasty, late 7th century–early
8th century A.D.
Glazed earthenware
Height: 26¾ in. (68 cm.)

This bulging-eyed, moustached warrior treads on a fanged demon he has vanquished. The warrior's left hand rests on his hip; his right hand is held high in the air as if to brandish a now-lost weapon. His upper torso is garbed in armor composed of several plates, partly held together by a ropelike cord. The épaulières, or shoulder guards, are rendered as open-mouthed dragons. Shinguards, worn over trousers and boots, protect his legs. Beneath his armor he wears both a green long-sleeved undergarment and an amber-colored tunic. The hem and sleeve of the tunic flare out as if blown by the wind, or made to billow as the result of the guardian's rapid movements. The guardian's hair has been pulled back and up into a complex coiffure topped by a ball like that on the head of the guardian animal (no. 28). The demon sprawls on his back, pressed against the tall base, which resembles a rocky ledge. A stippled pattern of cream, green, and amber-colored glazes covers most of both figures, though certain areas, such as the rope bindings and tunic, are carefully glazed in just one color. The demon's head and the head and hands of the warrior have been left unglazed. Judging from the pigment that remains, the warrior must originally have had flaming red hair. The earthenware is buff colored.

Figurines like this guardian were usually placed in pairs at or near the entrance to a burial chamber and were often depicted as almost mirror images.¹ Together with a pair of animal figurines, they are believed to have comprised the Four Spirits mentioned in T'ang ritual texts. The names of the two warriors are thought to be *Tang-k'uang* ("Keeper or Protector of the Burial Vault") and *Tang-yeh* ("Keeper or Protector of the Wilderness, the Burial Ground").² Probably because of their supernatural function, they were larger than other tomb figurines.

Influenced by depictions of Buddhist deities such as the Lokapala ("Guardians of the Four Directions"), the Vajrapāṇi ("Thunderbolt-Wielding Guardians"), and others, Chinese potters began to make guardian figurines in more extravagant, otherworldly forms in the mid-seventh century A.D. The Lokapala were frequently portrayed stamping on demons, apparently in a symbolic gesture of subduing evil. The facial expressions of the warriors gradually became exaggeratedly fierce, and their armor was embellished with animal masks.³ A figurine of a warrior standing on a bull, excavated from a tomb dated to 668 A.D., is an early example of this style. It may have been inspired by an image of Nārāyaṇa, a Hindu-Buddhist form of the god Vishnu, whose vehicle was a bull.⁴ After the mid-seventh century A.D., most armor-clad warriors were depicted trampling on demons or standing on an animal, usually a bull.⁵ In the eighth century these guardian figurines became even more grotesque in appearance.⁶

Among the many excavated tomb guardians that resemble the Morse figurine, the one most similar is a warrior standing on a bull from a Sian tomb dating to 684–704 A.D. Not only are the size and costume of this excavated guardian similar, but so is his coiffure.⁷ Many other guardian figurines excavated in Sian and Loyang share characteristics with this piece; particularly interesting are the large figurines (130 centimeters high) from the tomb of Prince Chang-huai, dated to 711 A.D.⁸ A piece in the Avery Brundage collection of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, is dressed similarly and is about the same size as the Morse figure. A larger figurine in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is also of this type.⁹

1. Kaogu, 1972/3, p. 33, pl. 10:2; *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pls. 20, 21, 84, 85. The remains of four such guardian figures were found in the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai (*Wenwu*, 1964/1, p. 10).
2. Kaogu, 1956/5, pp. 50–52, 54. Thus, according to this theory, the Four Spirits mentioned are not the four directional animals to which the term is usually applied. My translation of the names is tentative.

3. Usually only the Lokapala are mentioned. See William Watson, *The Genius of China* (London, 1973), pp. 143–44, no. 297. It seems probable that a whole group of related Buddhist deities provided the stimulus. Those mentioned appear to be likely candidates. See Alexander C. Soper, *Literary Evidence For Early Buddhist Art in China* (Switzerland, 1959), pp. 229–35, 237–38, 239–41, for the attributes of these. See also T'an Tan-chiung, *T'ang Three-Color Pottery* (in Chinese; Taipei, 1977), pp. 29–35, 82, pls. 16A, 16B.

4. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province*, pl. 21; its mate is in Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), pl. 257; Soper, *Literary Evidence*, pp. 237–38.

5. Important exceptions to this general principle are the two guardian figures from the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-chen, dated to 698 A.D. Although typically grotesque in appearance, they stand on simple plinths. See *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 44–45, pls. 39–41.

6. Ibid., pls. 63, 96; *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province*, pls. 64, 84, 85.

7. *Wenwu*, 1956/11, inside cover fig. 2; Akiyama et al., *Neolithic Cultures*, pl. 258; the tomb dates to the reign of Empress Wu, according to *T'ang Three-Color Ware Tomb Figurines of Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1964), pl. 9, and *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province*, pls. 126, 127.

8. *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 14, p. 20, fig. 10. Also of note is an undated guardian treading on a demon. See *Wenwu*, 1956/8, p. 36, fig. 11.

9. René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, ed., *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture* (Tokyo, 1974), pp. 202–203, no. 99; Suzanne G. Valenstein, *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics* (New York, 1975), pl. 25.

T'ang dynasty, late 7th century—early

8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height: 13½ in. (34.3 cm.)

This fantastic winged creature, head surmounted by two antler-like horns, sits on its haunches on a slightly raised base. Above its feline face, between the two cream-colored horns, is a round, brown protuberance. Green, clear, and amber-colored glazes cover the animal's body. Sometimes glazes were combined to create a dappled effect, as seen on the chest; at other times they were used separately, as on the horns. The creature is made of earthenware that is somewhat pink.

Tomb excavations show that figurines such as this were paired with similar, human-faced creatures and that both were usually placed in a protective position in or near the entrance of the tomb chamber along with two armor-clad warriors, presumably to protect the tomb.¹ These four figurines may well be the Four Spirits mentioned in T'ang burial regulations. If so, the names of the two guardian animals would be *Tsu-ming* ("Ancestral Intelligence") and *Ti-chu* ("Earth Axis")—although it is not known which name goes with which animal.² Frequently, creatures such as these are called *Ch'i-t'ou* ("Ugly Heads"). During the Chou and Han dynasties, this term apparently referred to the mask worn by exorcists and may have been extended in usage during the T'ang dynasty to refer to these apotropaic creatures as well. Another frequently encountered name for them is *T'u-kuei*, "Earth Spirits."³

The earliest figurines of these fantastic beasts appear to date from the Northern Wei dynasty. A single human-faced creature was excavated from the tomb of Ssu-ma Chin-lung, who died in 484 A.D. The creature has what appears to be a broken-off bulge or horn on its head. Whether or not this figure was part of a pair is unclear.⁴ Two figurines of animals depicted on all fours, rather than sitting on their haunches, were found in a tomb dated to 519 A.D. These unusual creatures have spikes down their spines. Whether their pose was influenced by the animal guardians placed before tombs in the Han and Six Dynasties periods requires further study, but it is clear that animal figurines of this sort were rare.⁵ The more usual style of portraying guardian animals is exemplified by a pair of figurines from the tomb of Yüan Shao, dated to 528 A.D. The human and animal faces are clearly differentiated, and the creatures sit on their haunches with flamelike spikes emerging from their backs and curly manes.⁶ During the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, these guardian animals became even more fantastic in appearance while simultaneously reflecting the general trend toward more naturalistic three-dimensional forms.

The painted and glazed creature from the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, dating to 664 A.D., has wings and antler-like horns similar to those on the Morse piece, but lacks its rounded musculature, indicating that it was made a bit earlier. More similar examples come from the tombs of Tu-ku Ssu-chen,

dating to 698 A.D., and Prince Chang-huai, dating to 711 A.D.⁷ Closest in style to the Morse figurine—with the same rounded wings—are some undated pieces excavated in Shantung and Hupei provinces. The Shantung example is the same size as the Morse figurine (indicating that they probably came from similarly sized tombs) and also has a knob between its horns,⁸ which the piece from Hupei lacks. This knob presumably had some magical significance. The National Museum of History, Taipei, contains several figurines that resemble the Morse guardian animal. Some are among the group of objects excavated in Honan Province in 1928 and later transported to Taiwan.⁹

1. Kaogu, 1960/3, p. 34; Kaogu, 1972/3, p. 32; *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 32–33, 45, pl. 29.

2. Kaogu, 1956/5, pp. 50–52, 54; for a discussion of *Tsu-ming* in an earlier form see Derk Bodde, *Festivals in Classical China* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 86–87; I have followed his translation.

3. There is disagreement about the appropriateness of these names; see William Watson, *The Genius of China* (London, 1973), pp. 143–44, no. 298; Carl Hentze, *Chinese Tomb Figures* (London, 1928), p. 73; *Wenwu*, 1958/9, p. 72.

4. *Wenwu*, 1972/3, p. 24, p. 31, fig. 14:4; *Cultural Relics Unearthed During the Period of the Great Cultural Revolution*, vol. 1 (Peking, 1972), pl. 142.

5. *Wenwu*, 1955/12, p. 62, p. 63, fig. 2; Kaogu, 1957/4, p. 14, pl. 4:5–6, has Sui examples; see *Zhongyuan Wenwu*, 1981/2, pl. 7, for some possible Han "ancestors."

6. Kaogu, 1973/4, p. 222, pl. 12:1–2.

7. *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 35, fig. 7; *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), p. 35, pl. 38; *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 15, p. 20, fig. 12.

8. *A Selection of Cultural Relics from Shantung Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1959), p. 115, pl. 221; *Wenwu*, 1957/1, p. 70, fig. 2 (misprinted as 3).

9. National Museum of History, *Tri Color Pottery of the T'ang Dynasty* (Taipei, 1977), pls. 27, 28, 32. I am indebted to the director of the museum, Ho Hao-t'ien, for this information.





Sui–Early T'ang dynasties, late 6th century–

early 7th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 12½ in. (32 cm.)

This bejeweled lady is seated on a rattan or wicker stool. She is dressed in a long-sleeved, low-cut undergarment that appears to be covered either by a long-skirted jumper or a tunic tucked into a long skirt. A wide belt is buckled just under her bosom. Her hair has been parted in the middle and braided; the braids are coiled at the back of her head. Trefoil-shaped shoes poke out from under her skirt. She is portrayed reading a book. The earthenware body of this figurine was lightened by the addition of white slip, which may still be seen. Traces of red and black pigment are also visible.¹

The facial features of this figurine resemble those of the Tocharians, an Indo-European people who lived in Central Asia; many of the famous musicians of Kucha are believed to be of this stock (see nos. 30, 31).² The figure's braided coiffure is of Turkish origin and often appears on grooms belonging to a variety of ethnic groups (see no. 40). The Rietberg Museum has a three-color-glazed figurine of a seated female wine merchant with her hair styled in this manner, but her full lips and turned-up nose indicate that she comes from a different ethnic group from the lady seen here.³ The fact that the Morse figure is holding a codex, rather than a scroll, is another indication that the lady represented is of foreign origin. The codex was the favored form for books in Central Asia at the time of the Sui dynasty, but apparently did not appear in China until the T'ang dynasty and only gradually became popular.⁴

An unglazed figure of a seated lady, almost the same size as the Morse figure, was found in an undated (probably Early T'ang) tomb in Hopei Province. The Hopei figure sits in a relaxed pose with her head resting on her elbow.⁵ Other unglazed figurines of seated ladies include a shorter piece dated to the Sui dynasty and some very small pieces from the tomb of Chang Su, dated to 559 A.D. None of these are as well made as the Morse figure.⁶

Polychrome-glazed figurines of seated ladies have been excavated from sites in Sian and Loyang and are dated to the early eighth century and a little later, respectively.⁷ These glazed statuettes rival the Morse seated lady in the quality of their modeling. Indeed, they may be viewed as her descendants. These ladies have been unconvincingly described as portraits of the deceased and as Buddhist worshippers.⁸ At this time, however, it seems best to simply regard these fine statuettes, including this one, as examples of the "beautiful women" popular in Chinese art.

1. The dating of this figure is consistent with the results of a thermoluminescence test. (Daybreak Nuclear and Medical Systems, Inc., sample 128A2.)
2. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 32–33, 52–54; Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:104–105.
3. Helmut Brinker and Eberhard Fischer, *Treasures from the Rietberg Museum* (New York, 1980), pp. 117–19, no. 43.
4. Tsuen-Hsuei Tsien, *Written on Bamboo and Silk* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 153–57; Martin Ginn, "The Book in China," and Emel Esin, "Central Asia," in *The Book Through Five Thousand Years*, ed. by Hendrik D. L. Vervliet (London and New York, 1972), pp. 84, 111.
5. *Wenwu*, 1957/12, p. 49, fig. 20.
6. *Kaogu*, 1957/6, pp. 32–33, pl. 12:5; *The Northern Ch'i Tomb of Chang Su in K'uang-po in T'ai-yuan* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pl. 17.
7. *Tang Three-Color Ware Tomb Figurines of Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1964), pls. 5, 6; *T'ang Three-Color Ware of Loyang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pl. 7; Brinker and Fischer, *Treasures*, pp. 113–14, no. 41.
8. *Wenwu*, 1955/9, pp. 152–53; Chang Wan-li, *Three-Colour Glaze Pottery of the T'ang Dynasty*, 3 vols. (Hong Kong, 1977), 3:24–25.

T'ang dynasty, 7th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 6¼ in. (15.9 cm.)

These two kneeling musicians wear identical low-cut, high-waisted outfits. Their coiffures, fashioned into wedge-shaped topknots, are also the same. One grasps cymbals; the other plays a lutelike instrument, probably a *p'i-p'a*.¹ Their delicate facial features are delineated in black paint. Some pigment is visible on other parts of the figurines.

These two women were undoubtedly once part of a much larger ensemble. Figures of eight seated female musicians and five dancing girls were found in the tomb of Chang Sheng, dated to 595 A.D., and the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, dated to 664 A.D., contained fourteen seated female musicians and two dancing girls.²

During the Sui and T'ang dynasties, foreign musicians, particularly the female musicians of the Central Asian city of Kucha, were in vogue. They popularized foreign instruments, such as the *p'i-p'a*, and influenced the course of fashion with their formfitting costumes.³ Because the Kuchean entertainers were given so much attention in the historical records, it has been customary to call musicians such as these "Kucheans." However, in analyzing the figurines of musicians found in the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, a recent Chinese publication acknowledges foreign influences, but emphasizes the combination of foreign and native forms.⁴

Tomb figurines of musical ensembles did not originate during the Sui dynasty, but the depiction of troupes of female musicians does seem to have been popular in the Sui-T'ang era. Several figurines of kneeling female musicians were excavated from the tomb of Chang Sheng, dated to 595 A.D. Though some appear to be playing the same instruments as the Morse pair, they have the typical flat hairstyles of the Sui dynasty.⁵ Historical records indicate that hair piled high on the head did not become fashionable until the Early T'ang period, though recently some Sui examples have been found.⁶ Among the various excavated pieces, a figure from the Early T'ang tomb of Li Shuang, dated to 668 A.D., most resembles the Morse musicians in hairstyle.⁷ Though the seated musicians discovered in Cheng Jen-t'ai's tomb, dated to 664 A.D., have their hair dressed in one or two small topknots, they otherwise look much like the Morse pieces, which were probably made at about the same time.⁸

Figurines of standing musicians have been found, but seated or kneeling musicians are believed to have been of higher rank. Among the more unusual seated musicians found thus far are troupes of musicians portrayed playing their instruments while riding on the backs of camels.⁹

1. *P'i-p'a* are made in two varieties, those with four strings and those with five strings. Since only three strings are visible on this instrument, it may be a modern replacement. It should be noted that at least one excavated example of a figurine playing a three-string *p'i-p'a* is known, and in that case carelessness or an old mold may be responsible—*The Art of Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture* (in Chinese; Peking, 1957), pl. 53. Note that the numbering of this edition differs from the 1955 edition; there pl. 50.

2. *Kaogu*, 1959/10, pp. 541–45, p. 542, fig. 12:2–3, pl. 10:1–6; *Wenwu*, 1977, pp. 35–37, pl. 4:3.

3. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), pp. 50–52; Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 52–55.

4. *Wenwu*, 1980/7, pp. 42–46.

5. *Kaogu*, 1959/10, p. 542, fig. 12:2–3, pl. 10:1–6.

6. *Kaogu*, 1956/5, pp. 53–54, pl. 6:5, reproduces a piece dated to 642 A.D.; *Wenwu*, 1981/4, p. 30, describes figurines from a Sui tomb dated to 584 A.D. as having "high" topknots, which may also be seen in wall paintings from this tomb.

7. *Wenwu*, 1959/3, pp. 44–45, p. 48, fig. 27.

8. *Wenwu*, 1972/7, pl. 4:3.

9. Jan Fontein and Tung Wu, *Han and T'ang Murals* (Boston, 1976), p. 79; *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 60–61, color pl. 2; *Kaogu*, 1960/3, p. 35, pl. 6.



32 STANDING LADY WITH STOLE

T'ang dynasty, first quarter of 8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height: 15¾ in. (40 cm.)

This haughty lady wears a long green skirt with a matching hip-length tunic, a short brown jacket, and a wheat-colored stole. A knotted ribbon hangs down her back. During firing, the brown and amber-colored glazes must have run onto the green-glazed surfaces, producing the lovely mottled effect. Traces of black and red pigment on the unglazed head hint that the figure was once carefully painted. The lady's hair is coiled and tied into a "butterfly" topknot. At the base, both the buff earthenware body and its white-slip coating are visible.

A figurine of a similarly clothed standing lady from the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-chen, dated to 698 A.D., differs in being slightly more slender (indicative of an earlier date) and in her two hornlike topknots.¹ Three ladies from an undated, but probably early eighth century, tomb in Loyang possess the more robust form of the Morse figurine, though none has her "butterfly" coiffure. One has her hair dressed in a tall wedge-shaped structure; the others sport rounded topknots.² Even closer parallels to the Morse figurine are found in the National Museum of History, Taipei. These pieces, unearthed in Honan Province in 1928, possess nearly identical costumes and hairstyles.³

Many T'ang wall paintings contain representations of similar standing ladies. Of particular interest is the representation of a figure in Prince I-te's tomb (706 A.D.); that standing lady is also shown wearing an overtunic in addition to a skirt, jacket, and stole.⁴

During the Sui dynasty and the first half of the T'ang, dress was strongly influenced by Central Asian and Persian styles. Formfitting costumes for women, sometimes quite décolleté, became popular. Scarves and stoles, whose use in Persia dates to the pre-Christian era, were also popular during this period.⁵ During succeeding dynasties, there was a return to the more voluminous robes of the native Chinese tradition.

1. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 35-36, pl. 45:2.

2. *T'ang Three-Color Ware of Loyang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pls. 1-3; *Kaogu*, 1972/3, pp. 32-33, pl. 9:2.

3. National Museum of History, *Tri Color Pottery of the T'ang Dynasty* (Taipei, 1977), p. 67, pl. 13 (caption 12 applies to these); T'an Tan-chiung, *T'ang Three-Color Pottery* (in Chinese; Taipei, 1977), pp. 85-86, pls. 21A, B; I am indebted to the director of the National Museum, Ho Hao-t'ien, for information concerning these objects' history.

4. *Murals in the Tomb of Li Chung-jun of the T'ang Dynasty* (in Chinese; Peking, 1974), pl. 36.

5. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 18-22.



33 LADY HOLDING BIRD

T'ang dynasty, first quarter of 8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height: 15 in. (38.1 cm.)

This lady is clad in a calf-length brown coat; a small green bird perches on her hand. The lapels of her coat and her slipper-like shoes are also green. Only traces of paint are visible on the unglazed hands, head, and neck of this figurine. The lady's coiffure is a fuller version of the "butterfly" topknot seen on the standing lady (no. 32).

Women of high rank in T'ang China frequently adopted male dress for the active life they favored. This has led some observers to misidentify these figurines as eunuch servants.¹ However, the eunuch servants depicted in T'ang wall paintings are clearly distinguishable from similarly garbed ladies by their sometimes grotesquely servile features.² Furthermore, enough depictions of women dressed as men, in both wall paintings and figurines, have been found in recent years to dispel any notion that figurines such as the one seen here resulted from a female head mistakenly attached to a male body.

Although they have the same clothing and hairstyle, the painted figurines found in the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai, dated to 706 A.D., have slighter proportions than their counterpart in the Morse collection, perhaps indicating an earlier date. On the other hand, some female figurines, dressed as men, from a tomb dated to 723 A.D., are more robust than the Morse figurine and have the pageboy coiffure popular in the second quarter of the eighth century.³ Thus, the Morse piece may be dated before 723 A.D. Indeed, an engraving on the sarcophagus of Wei Chiung, dated to 708 A.D., of a lady holding an exotic long-tailed bird provides the closest parallel to the Morse piece among archaeologically excavated objects.⁴

A painted figurine, now in the Tenri Museum, Nara, Japan, resembles the Morse piece. Even closer in appearance is the glazed figurine in the collection of Ezekiel Schloss, once paired with the Morse lady.⁵

It has been suggested that pieces such as this portray Uigur Turks, perhaps because those people were famed for their expertise in falconry.⁶ However, the features of this lady do not appear strikingly foreign, and she appears to be holding a parrot or parakeet rather than a bird of prey. Thus, it seems most likely that this is a Chinese lady amusing herself with a pet.

1. Adrian M. Joseph, Hugh M. Moss, and S. J. Fleming, *Chinese Burial Objects of the Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (London, 1970), pl. 73.

2. *Murals in the Tomb of Li Hsien of the T'ang Dynasty* (in Chinese; Peking, 1974), pls. 32, 36; *Murals in the Tomb of Li Chung-jun of the T'ang Dynasty* (in Chinese; Peking, 1974), pls. 25, 26.

3. *Wenwu*, 1964/1, p. 20, figs. 17, 18. See also Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), pl. 247; for Hsien-yü T'ing-hui's tomb, see *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 58-59, pl. 80:1-2.



4. *Wenwu*, 1959/8, p. 12, fig. 11.

5. Masahiko Sato, Gakuji Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art of the World*, vol. 11, *Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1976), pl. 182; Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 2: color pl. 9.

6. *Ibid.*, 1:165-67.

34 STANDING LADY

T'ang dynasty, second quarter of 8th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 18¼ in. (46.5 cm.)

Attired in a long, straight gown, this plump figure raises her arms in an expectant manner. Her hands appear surprisingly small and delicate in comparison to her girth. Pointed shoes peek out from under her skirt. Her pageboy coiffure also includes a bun. Originally, the red earthenware body was probably coated with white slip and then painted; traces of both slip and pigment remain.

In the Sui and Early T'ang dynasties and in the dynasties preceding them, slenderness and grace were considered to epitomize the feminine ideal. In the eighth century A.D. a new concept of beauty emerged, and heavyset palace ladies are shown mingling with thin companions in various early-eighth-century murals.¹ Judging from the ample-bodied figurines found in Hsien-yü T'ing-hui's tomb, the corpulent female was preferred by 723 A.D.² During the 740s and 750s both male and female figurines were depicted with full figures and faces.³

At one time it was believed that Yang Kuei-fei, one of China's great beauties, inspired the fashion in plumpness. However, she did not become the beloved and influential concubine of the T'ang emperor Hsüan-tsung until sometime during the early 740s A.D. By then, voluptuousness was already considered the ideal. Contemporary paintings from Central Asia and Japan show that rotundity was also favored in those areas.⁴

Numerous figurines quite similar to this one and also dated to the second quarter of the eighth century have been excavated in recent years in Shensi Province, and it seems likely that the Morse figurine also came from this region. A tomb near Sian, dated to 744 A.D., yielded some pieces especially close to the Morse standing lady.⁵

It is unusual to find figurines of ladies this large and of such fine quality in collections outside China. However, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has a buff-bodied piece similar to the Morse figurine.⁶

1. *Murals in the Tomb of Li Hsien of the T'ang Dynasty* (in Chinese; Peking, 1974), pls. 44, 45.

2. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 56-65, color pls. 6, 7, pls. 76, 77.

3. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pls. 54-70, 89-97, 102-108.

4. Ryoichi Hayashi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, trans. by Robert Ricketts (New York and Tokyo, 1975), pp. 122-26, 162-63.

5. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province*, pls. 67, 69, 70.

6. Jan Fontein and Tung Wu, *Unearthing China's Past* (Boston, 1973), pp. 174-75.



35 LADY IN HOODED CLOAK

T'ang dynasty, first half of 8th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 14½ in. (36.9 cm.)

Enveloped in a voluminous hooded cloak, this lady is almost as full-figured as the standing lady of the preceding entry. More of the original paint and less of the white slip undercoat is visible, however. A touch of red may be observed on the lips; some black still adheres to the hair. This figurine was made of red earthenware, which is particularly noticeable at the point on the base where the figure has been damaged.

During the T'ang dynasty women of the upper classes led an active life and participated in many athletic activities, such as horseback riding. This particular lady is presumably bundled up to go off on some sort of expedition. In fact, it is her costume that makes her so unusual; no figurine with an identical costume has been found. However, a figurine of a lady with a short, hoodless cloak thrown around her shoulders and another figurine of a man dressed in a cloak with a separate hood have both been excavated in Shensi Province from tombs dated to 744 and 748 A.D., respectively.¹ Although dressed and coiffured differently, two figurines of ladies from a tomb dated to 745 A.D. have the same delicate features as this hooded lady.²

In the seventh century, noblewomen wore a garment called a *mu-li*, which covered them from head to toe. Later, the less restrictive *wei-mao*, consisting of a scarf, usually coupled with a brimmed hat, was considered sufficient. This lady, with her portly build, seems to be wearing an eighth-century version of the *mu-li*.³

1. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pls. 67, 96.

2. *Ibid.*, pls. 90, 91.

3. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 20-21, 108-11, pl. 31. This piece was formerly owned by Dr. Mahler.



T'ang dynasty, second half of 7th century—
early 8th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 16¾ in. (42.6 cm.)

Mounted on a horse with a slightly turned neck, this lady wears a high-peaked helmet to protect herself from the elements and, perhaps, from the stares of strangers. A stole is wrapped around her shoulders and over her bosom. Her costume consists of a long-sleeved undergarment, a short-sleeved jacket or tunic, and a high-waisted skirt. The horse's mane has been clipped. Some polychrome decoration still adheres to the buff earthenware. The horse's tail has been broken.

Women enjoyed more power and freedom during the Sui and T'ang dynasties than in subsequent periods. Upper-class women participated in many activities and were not constrained by footbinding, which only became widespread in the Sung and Yüan dynasties.¹ Among the Toba Turks and other "barbarian" groups, which had intermarried with the great northern Chinese families during the Six Dynasties period, women had always enjoyed a higher status and exercised more political influence than was considered acceptable in traditional China. Without this influence, it seems unlikely that a woman like the Empress Wu, the widow of the Emperor Kao-tsung, could have usurped the throne and briefly established her own dynasty.²

During the seventh and eighth centuries, again probably influenced by Turkish and other foreign customs, Chinese women enjoyed horseback riding. They even played polo, a sport the Tibetans had brought to China.³ Ladies wore a variety of outer garments, ranging from the voluminous *mu-li* to men's clothing. The hoodlike hat the Morse figurine wears has affinities with the *wei-mao*—a scarf or veil often worn with a brimmed hat. A standing male figurine from a tomb dating to 748 A.D. is also shown with this headgear, which indicates that it was not reserved for women.⁴

Compared to the Morse equestrienne, a figurine from the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, dating to 664 A.D., appears rigid.⁵ Though dressed differently, some equestriennes from the tomb of Wei Chiung, dating to 708 A.D., resemble the Morse piece.⁶ These ladies are slightly plumper and hint at the round-faced horsewomen found in the tomb of Hsien-yü T'ing-hui, dating to 723 A.D.⁷ An undated, glazed equestrienne excavated in Loyang is portrayed in a costume that is similar to that worn by the Morse lady.⁸

A gray earthenware figurine in the Ezekiel Schloss collection is also similar to the Morse equestrienne. Their costumes are almost identical, but the Schloss figure is portrayed in the rigid, stiff style associated with earlier periods and, consequently, has been dated to the Early T'ang dynasty.⁹



1. Howard S. Levy, *Chinese Footbinding* (New York, 1966), pp. 37–48.

2. Yen Chih-t'ui, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan*, trans. by Teng Ssu-yü (Leiden, 1968), pp. 18–20; Arthur F. Wright, "The Sui Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 3, pt. 1, *Sui and T'ang China*, ed. by Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 51–54, pp. 63–66. See also R. W. L. Guisso, *Wu Tse-t'ien and the Politics of Legitimation in T'ang China* (Bellingham, Wash., 1978), pp. 1–5.

3. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 97–111; Jan Fontein and Wu Tung, *Han and T'ang Murals* (Boston, 1976), p. 101.

4. Mahler, *Westerners*, pp. 20–21, pp. 108–111; *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pl. 96.

5. *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 37, pl. 11:2. See also the figure without a hat, p. 44, fig. 21.

6. *Wenwu*, 1959/8, p. 15, p. 9, pl. 6.

7. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), p. 60, pl. 84: 3, 4.

8. *The Art of Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture* (in Chinese; Peking, 1957), pl. 60. Note that the numbering of this edition differs from the 1955 edition; there pl. 57.

9. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:197, 2: pl. 47.

37 EQUESTRIAN

T'ang dynasty, late 7th century–first quarter
of 8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height: 16 7/8 in. (42.9 cm.)

A cream-colored horse with chestnut mane, forelock, and nose stands, with his head turned slightly, on a rectangular base. The horse's tail has been docked and tied; his mane has been combed to one side of his neck. A green saddle has been placed over the brown saddlecloth. Perhaps accidentally, some green glaze colors the horse's rump as well. Seated on this steed is a rider with clenched fists that might once have held reins. Clothed in a cream-colored glazed tunic and trouser outfit, he gazes resolutely ahead. He has a broad nose and square chin. Black pigment still colors the turban on his head. His head, face, and hands are unglazed. The earthenware body is buff colored; traces of the white slip that originally coated the body can be seen on the equestrian's face.

Equestrian military figurines were common in the tomb retinues of the Northern Wei period¹ and of succeeding periods, when civilian riders appeared in greater numbers. Chinese and foreign men and women of high and low rank were all portrayed riding horses in figurines dating from the Sui and T'ang dynasties. Horseback riding became so popular during these periods that the government issued an edict in 667 A.D. prohibiting artisans and tradesmen from indulging in it. This was probably intended to preserve it as an upper-class privilege.² Thus, many of the figurines of low-ranking men and women on horseback should be understood to show musicians or grooms.

Although the Morse figurine resembles many excavated examples, including pieces from the tombs of Prince I-te and Princess Yung-t'ai, dating to 706 A.D., it most closely corresponds to statuettes depicting mounted foreign musicians from the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-chen, dating to 698 A.D.³ Other similar, but undated and unglazed, figurines of mounted servants have been found at a site in Loyang.⁴ The Morse equestrian is probably therefore a foreign servant.

A number of collections outside China include figurines related to, though not identical with, the Morse piece. An equestrienne in the Freer Gallery, Washington, D.C., rides a horse remarkably similar to the one seen here.⁵



1. *Kaogu*, 1973/4, p. 220, pl. 10:2-3; for pottery equestrians of the Western Han dynasty, see *Wenwu*, 1966/3, pp. 2-5, color pl. 1, pl. 1; Eastern Han bronze figurines are found in *Wenwu*, 1972/2, pp. 16-19, pl. 7.

2. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), pp. 58-59.

3. *Wenwu*, 1979/1, p. 67, pl. 11:4; *Wenwu*, 1964/1, pp. 10-12, pl. 2:2; *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 36-37, pl. 49:3-4.

4. *The Art of Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture* (in Chinese; Peking, 1957), pls. 48-51. Note that the numbering differs in the 1955 edition; there pls. 39-42.

5. John A. Pope, Josephine H. Knapp, and Esin Atil, *Oriental Ceramics*, vol. 9, *The Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.* (Tokyo, 1981), pl. 18 (black and white).

T'ang dynasty, late 7th–early 8th century A.D.
Painted earthenware
Height: 15½ in. (39.4 cm.)

A fully caparisoned horse paws spiritedly with his right front leg while his other legs remain firmly on the rectangular base. His mouth is opened wide, revealing his teeth. Tassles decorate the steed's chest and rump, and a medallion adorns his lower back. The horse's tail has been docked and tied; his mane has been combed to one side of his neck. The saddle lacks stirrups, but is depicted with a cloth covering, underblanket, and striped panniers. The pale buff earthenware body of the horse was once painted in bright colors, of which a few traces remain.

Depictions of horses are among the glories of Chinese art. If the first great age of equine art was the Ch'in-Han period—with the life-size chariot horses of the pottery "army" found near the first Ch'in emperor's tomb and the bronze "flying horse" unearthed in Kansu Province—then the Sui-T'ang period must be the second great age.¹ In both periods, horses renowned for their size, stamina, and all-round excellence were imported from kingdoms such as Bactria and Ferghana, west of China and east of Iran. Although horses were used primarily to mobilize armies, they were also valued for their beauty and were celebrated in poetry and in the fine arts.² Wall paintings in the recently excavated tombs of Prince I-te (706 A.D.) and Prince Chang-huai (711 A.D.) include representations of horses in military honor guards and on hunting grounds and polo fields. Many of these painted steeds resemble the Morse figurine.³

The muscular horse seen here would seem to have little in common with the spindly-legged horses made during the Northern Wei dynasty, yet it was during the Northern Wei period that decorative tassels, medallions, and other trappings became common. These ornaments may have been inspired by foreign, perhaps Sasanian, influences. It was also during the Northern Wei that the rectangular base became widely used; this innovation gave the statuette more stability.⁴

During the sixth through the eighth centuries A.D., tomb figurines of horses evolved from fragile, sticklike creatures into robust chargers. Depictions of movement became more common in the seventh century, as shown by the pawing horse discovered in the tomb of Chang Shih-kuei, dated to 657 A.D.⁵ However, that figurine lacks the plasticity of the Morse prancing horse and was probably made a few years earlier. Among excavated figurines, a fully caparisoned prancing horse from an undated site in Sian most resembles the Morse example. However, the clearly visible panniers under its saddle are much larger.⁶ The Ezekiel Schloss collection contains a prancing horse comparable to the Morse figure.⁷

The pose of these figurines has led some to suggest that they depict the trained "dancing" horses that performed for the eighth-century emperors Chung-tsung and Hsüan-tsung and were celebrated in T'ang literature.⁸

1. Maxwell K. Hearn, "The Terracotta Army of the First Emperor of Qin (221–206 B.C.)," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. by Wen Fong (New York, 1980), pp. 353–73; *Wenwu*, 1972/2, pp. 16–24, color pl. 1, pls. 5–7; *Historical Relics Unearthed in New China* (Peking, 1972), pl. 110.
2. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), pp. 58–70.
3. *Murals in the Tomb of Li Chung-jun of the T'ang Dynasty* (in Chinese; Peking, 1974), pls. 10–15; *Murals in the Tomb of Li Hsien of the T'ang Dynasty* (in Chinese; Peking, 1974), pls. 1–23.
4. *Kaogu*, 1972/5, p. 34, pl. 9:1; *Kaogu*, 1973/4, p. 221, pl. 11:1; Prudence Oliver Harper, *The Royal Hunter* (New York, 1978), pp. 33–34, 38–41; see *Wenwu*, 1981/10, pp. 82–88, 96, for an extensive discussion of T'ang horse trappings and their history.
5. *Kaogu*, 1978/3, p. 173, pl. 11:3.
6. Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), pl. 384.
7. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:218–19, 2: pl. 96.
8. *Ibid.*, 1:218–19; Schafer, *Golden Peaches*, p. 67.





39, 40 LARGE HORSE AND GROOM

T'ang dynasty, late 7th–first half of

8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height of horse: 22¾ in. (57.8 cm.)

Height of groom: 22½ in. (57.1 cm.)

A large, palomino-type horse stands, ears pricked and mouth open, on an unglazed rectangular base. The horse turns its head slightly. Although the figure is glazed primarily in yellow, a cream-colored blaze runs down its face, and chestnut mottling appears on its flanks and hindquarters. A splash of green glaze may be seen on the horse's arched neck. A groove along the horse's neck and a socket at his rump were probably once filled with horsehair or some other perishable material that imitated horsehair. A smiling groom clad in a long, brown coat with a green lapel tends the horse. Brown glaze covers parts of the groom's legs. Pigment is still visible on his unglazed head; his hands and chest are also unglazed. The groom is depicted with a braided coiffure, rather than the more common cloth turban. Both groom and horse are made of light-colored earthenware.

Quantities of horses of varying sizes and types have been found in T'ang tombs. Sometimes these figures are fully caparisoned (no. 38), and sometimes they are only partially outfitted (no. 41). Many, like this one, are without trappings. However, they may have originally been provided with equipment that was detachable or made of perishable material. Many bronze medallions and other detachable ornaments were found near several unadorned figurines of horses in the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-chen, dated to 698 A.D. The tomb reports speculate that other accoutrements, such as saddles and bridles, might have been made of more perishable materials that have been lost.¹ Because these glazed horses are roughly the same size as the Morse figurine and also have a groove at the neck and a socket at the rump, it seems reasonable to believe that the Morse piece may have originally had bronze ornaments and riding gear too.

An earthenware horse that resembles the Morse figurine and is the same color has been excavated from a tomb dated to between 690 and 704 A.D. It is a little larger than the Morse piece. Many small, glazed horses similar to the Morse figurine were found in the tomb of Princess Yung-t'ai (706 A.D.).² Figurines of horses that are the same color and of comparable size to the Morse figure are also in the National Museum of History, Taipei.³

Grooms of this kind are usually identified as Altaic Turks. The braided hairstyle, seen also on the seated lady (no. 29), is of Turkish origin. However, the belted coat, so prevalent among the figurines in the Morse collection, is of Persian origin. A large groom with high cheekbones, a broad nose, and similarly braided hair was found in the tomb of Prince Chang-huai (711 A.D.).⁴ It is also decorated in green and yellow glazes. A much smaller groom of the same ethnic type was excavated from an undated, but probably early-eighth-century tomb.⁵ His costume is slightly different from that of the Morse figure. A groom very similar to the Morse figure is in the collection of Ezekiel Schloss.⁶

It is unlikely that the horse and groom were made as a pair, since they were not acquired at the same time. Originally each piece was probably paired with a figurine similar to the ones seen here.

1. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), p. 37, pls. 50–52.

2. *T'ang Three-Color Ware Tomb Figurines of Shensi* (in Chinese; Peking, 1964), pls. 9, 13–15; *Wenwu*, 1964/1, pp. 10–12, p. 11, fig. 5.

3. National Museum of History, *Tri Color Pottery of the T'ang Dynasty* (Taipei, 1977), pls. 36, 50.

4. *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 15, fig. 3; measurement from *Archaeological Treasures Excavated in the People's Republic of China* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1973), no. 172.

5. *Kaogu*, 1960/3, p. 36, fig. 2; Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), pls. 252, 381.

6. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:222–23; 2: pl. 102.

41 SADDLED HORSE

T'ang dynasty, late 7th–first half of
8th century A.D.
Glazed earthenware
Height: 20 in. (50.8 cm.)

Saddled and bridled, but lacking elaborate trappings, this chestnut-glazed horse stands foursquare on an unglazed rectangular base. The unglazed saddle and saddle blanket were once richly painted, and traces of red pigment may still be seen on them. The cream-colored face of the horse is a dramatic contrast to the rich brown that has been used over the rest of the coat. A long groove in the horse's arched neck and a socket at his rump probably once held horsehair or a substitute for it, which has been lost (see no. 39). The figurine is made of light-colored earthenware.

Pieces as large as this horse were probably reserved for the tombs of persons of high station, though small figurines might also be buried in grand tombs.¹ A very large statuette of a horse (91.3 centimeters high), excavated from the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-ching, dating to 709 A.D., resembles the Morse figurine in many ways. Glazed in green with a white forehead and some dappling, it too has an unglazed saddle. The plumply modeled bodies of the two figurines are almost identical. The figurine from the 709 A.D. tomb, however, has an earthenware tail. Though it lacks a bridle, the tomb reports suggest that this horse may once have had more trappings, and, consequently, it seems reasonable to infer that the Morse figurine may have originally been provided with other gear as well.² Some figurines of horses—made of sun-baked clay and found in Astana in northwestern China—still have remnants of their "hair" and, thus, provide some clues to this horse's original appearance.³

A comparable, chestnut-glazed figurine of a horse in the National Museum of History, Taipei, is almost the same size as the Morse figure and is similar to it except that the cloth covering on the saddle and the saddle blanket are lighter colored; it also lacks a bridle and has a ceramic tail. It is unclear from either the photograph or description whether the Taipei example has a groove in its neck.⁴

1. *Wenwu*, 1964/1, pp. 10–12.

2. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), p. 47, pl. 67:2.

3. *Cultural Relics Unearthed in Sinkiang* (Peking, 1975), pls. 124, 125, 135.

4. National Museum of History, *Tri Color Pottery of the T'ang Dynasty* (Taipei, 1977), pl. 36. This horse is among the objects excavated in 1928 in Honan and subsequently acquired by the then provincial museum. From there it was transported to Taiwan. I am indebted to Ho Hao-t'ien, director of the National Museum, for information on the history of these pieces.



T'ang dynasty, late 7th–first half of
8th century A.D.
Glazed earthenware
Height: 23½ in. (59.7 cm.)

This figurine wears a knee-length green coat with one amber-glazed lapel. The groom's legs are encased in tall, black boots to which some green glaze still adheres. He wears a turban-like hat that has been colored with black pigment. Splashes of amber-colored glaze are visible on both the turban and the left hand of the figure. The groom's face and hands have been left unglazed; traces of red paint can be seen on his lips, and black paint is visible on his moustache, beard, brows, and eyes. The piercing eyes and pointed beard of this figurine indicate that it was intended to represent a foreigner. He stands on an unglazed rectangular base with his arms raised in a "pulling" gesture typical of figurines of grooms. The earthenware body is buff colored.

It has been suggested that figurines such as this—with carefully groomed, pointed, and somewhat flat beards—portray Uigur Turks.¹ The Uigurs, known as *Hui-ho* or *Hui-hu* in the Chinese records, were a seminomadic people whose skills as traders and merchants were famous. While residing in China, some of the Uigurs practiced usury, which, along with their purportedly arrogant ways, earned them the scorn of the Chinese. Their own territory shifted from place to place in Central Asia, yet they eventually grew quite powerful, even lending assistance to the Chinese in the suppression of the An Lu-shan revolt of the mid-eighth century A.D. For this their khan was given the hand of a Chinese princess in marriage.² If this figure of a groom was indeed intended to represent a Uigur, he must have been one of the poorer ones, who were forced to work with horses rather than sell them.

A figurine of a groom from the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-ching, dated to 709 A.D., appears to represent a member of the same ethnic group as the Morse groom, but is considerably larger (82.4 centimeters high) and wears a slightly different costume. This figurine comes from a group of taller grooms found within the same tomb. Their size suggests that they may have attended camels rather than horses.³ The National Museum of History, Taipei, has a piece that is almost identical to the Morse figure. It is a bit larger (63 centimeters high) and wears a brown coat with a green lapel. Another somewhat smaller figurine of this type is in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.⁴



1. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:101.

2. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 145–46; Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), p. 20.

3. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 46–47, pl. 65:3.

4. National Museum of History, *Tri Color Pottery of the T'ang Dynasty* (Taipei, 1977), pl. 23. I am indebted to Ho Hao-t'ien, director of the National Museum, for information on the background of the figurine in that collection. Helen E. Fernald and Donald M. Sutherland, "West-East," *Bulletin of the Royal Ontario Museum of Archaeology* 19 (1952), pl. 1:23.



43, 44 UNGLAZED CAMEL AND GROOM

Camel

Sui–Early T'ang dynasties, 7th century A.D.

Glazed and painted earthenware

Height: 14 in. (35.6 cm.)

Groom

Early T'ang dynasty, 7th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 14 in. (35.6 cm.)

Loaded down with provisions, this camel stands stiffly at attention, as if awaiting a command to proceed. There are faintly striped saddlebags tied between his humps; the ropes holding these bags are carefully modeled, as are the rabbits and pilgrim bottles suspended on either side of the camel. Traces of the transparent glaze that once covered the camel's light earthenware body are observable, as are red and black pigments, which decorated it. The figurine of the groom still has much of its original paint. The groom may once have held a rope in his clenched fists. He is depicted wearing trousers and a cloth turban (see no. 47). The groom's earthenware body is somewhat pink.

Of the three figurines of camels in the Morse collection, this is the oldest. It has the rigid posture typical of figurines of camels that date to the Northern Wei dynasty and the early sixth century A.D., yet it differs from those in that its head is larger and its neck is more clearly delineated from its furry mane.¹ Although the Morse camel shares certain characteristics with camels from the Northern Ch'i dynasty—such as the long legs of a piece from the tomb of Kao Jun, dating to 576 A.D.—it has more in common with

figurines of a later date, such as the camel from the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, dating to 664 A.D.² Like the Morse piece, the camel from Cheng Jen-t'ai's tomb was both glazed and painted, and its saddlebags are clearly covered with or made of leopard skin; it is also more naturalistically rendered and carries rabbits and pilgrim bottles. The turned head and robust musculature suggest that the camel from Cheng Jen-t'ai's tomb may have been made later than the Morse camel. Camels similar to the Morse figurine may be found in the National Museum of History, Taipei, and in a private collection in Japan.³

A figurine from the tomb of Chang Shih-kuei, dating to 657 A.D., is almost identical in costume, ethnic type, and pose to the Morse groom. It, however, was originally both glazed and painted.⁴ Another figurine that resembles the Morse groom is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.⁵

Although this camel and groom complement each other, they may not have come from the same tomb. Indeed, it is possible that the figurine of the groom is somewhat later than that of the camel.

1. Kaogu, 1972/5, p. 34, pl. 9:2; Kaogu, 1973/4, pp. 221–22, p. 221, fig. 7:2; Wenwu, 1979/3, p. 20, p. 27, fig. 23.

2. Kaogu, 1979/3, p. 240, fig. 6:8, pl. 8:4; Wenwu, 1972/7, p. 38, pl. 10:4.

3. T'an Tan-chiung, *T'ang Three-Color Pottery* (in Chinese; Taipei, 1977), pl. 46A; Osaka Municipal Art Museum, *The Art of the Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (in Japanese; Osaka, 1978), pl. 181.

4. Kaogu, 1978/3, p. 171, pl. 9:2.

5. Margaret Medley, *T'ang Pottery and Porcelain* (London, 1981), p. 56, pl. 47.



T'ang dynasty, late 7th–first quarter of
8th century A.D.
Painted earthenware
Height: 28¼ in. (71.7 cm.)

This merchant or camel driver naps with his drooping head supported by his right hand. His elbow rests on his right leg, which has been thrown over the camel's hump. He grasps his peaked cap to prevent it from falling. His cloak has already slipped off his right shoulder and just covers his left. With his wide, prominent nose and square face, this foreigner appears to be a western Asiatic. A fringed blanket covers the camel's back, with holes tailored for the protruding humps. Saddlebags hang down on either side of the humps. Red pigment colors the hairy tufts on the camel as well as parts of the merchant's face; some white pigment also remains. The earthenware body is buff colored.¹

So far as is known, tomb figurines of camels were first made in the Northern Wei period, though images of camels appeared in Chinese art as early as the Han dynasty.² Subsequently, most tombs dating from the sixth through eighth centuries A.D. were equipped with at least one figurine of a camel. Standing grooms usually accompanied the camels. Figures of mounted camels were less common, though in recent years many camels bearing riders have been discovered in T'ang dynasty tombs, the most remarkable being two camels bearing small orchestras.³

The closest parallels to the Morse camel and rider have been unearthed in Shensi Province, and it is quite possible that the Morse figurine also comes from this area.⁴ An exceptionally large (113 centimeters high) glazed figurine from the tomb of Tu-ku Ssu-ching, dating to 709 A.D., is more fluidly modeled than the Morse piece and, therefore, may date a little later.⁵ On the other hand, a somewhat smaller (51 centimeters high) red earthenware figurine from an undated site may predate the Morse example by a few years, judging from the camel's more rigid stance and the large size of its rider.⁶ Neither of the foreigners mounted on these excavated examples is posed in as unusual a manner as this western Asiatic; one simply raises his fist in a gesture typical of grooms, and the other holds both hands forward as if grasping reins. Moreover, both these riders appear to be detachable from their mounts, while the Morse rider and camel are joined together.

Figurines of camels with riders are rare in collections outside China. An unglazed camel of comparable size, which bears a foreigner of the same ethnic group as the Morse rider, is in a private collection in Japan, and a large red earthenware camel with rider is in the collection of Ezekiel Schloss.⁷

1. The dating of this figurine is consistent with thermoluminescence tests conducted on both the camel and the rider (Oxford reference numbers 266 e 82 and 266 p 69).
2. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:66–67, 94; *Wenwu*, 1972/3, pp. 22–23; William Watson, *The Genius of China* (London, 1973), pp. 110–11, nos. 173, 175.
3. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 60–61, color pl. 2; *Kaogu*, 1960/3, p. 35, pl. 6; *Kaogu*, 1957/5, pp. 53–57, pl. 11; *Kaogu*, 1965/9, pp. 462–66, pl. 9:15.
4. Though most unglazed figurines found in Shensi Province are made of red rather than buff earthenware, at least one buff-colored figurine of a camel has been excavated there. See *Wenwu*, 1964/1, p. 11, p. 21, fig. 23.
5. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian*, p. 47, pl. 70.
6. *The Art of Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture* (in Chinese; Peking, 1957), pl. 39; note that this plate is omitted in the 1955 edition.
7. Yūzō Sugimura, *Chinese Sculpture, Bronzes, and Jades in Japanese Collections*, trans. and adapted by Burton Watson (Honolulu, 1966), pl. 22; Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 1:226; 2: pl. 111. Schloss also possesses a large, riderless camel made of buff (not red) earthenware and resembling the Morse piece. See 1:219; 2: pl. 97.

T'ang dynasty, first half of 8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height of camel: 15¼ in. (38.7 cm.)

Height of groom: 13 in. (33 cm.)

This chestnut and cream-colored camel stands quietly and firmly on an unglazed rectangular base. A fringed saddle-cloth and a pack glazed in a brilliant blue cover the camel's back. Two saddlebags decorated with ogre-like faces hang down between the camel's humps. The same bright blue that covers the camel's pack has been used on the lapels of the chestnut-colored coat worn by the bearded groom, whose trousers were splashed with transparent blue and chestnut-colored glazes. The groom's fists are raised as if clutching a rope, now lost, that was once attached to the camel. The head and hands of the groom were once covered with white slip and painted. Both the camel and the groom are made of light-colored earthenware.

The earliest known glazed earthenware camels and grooms come from the tomb of Ssu-ma Chin-lung, who died in 484 A.D. These camels and grooms stand on bases and strike poses that are basically the same as those seen on later pieces. Although approximately the same size as the Morse pieces, the excavated camels and grooms differ from them considerably: their bodies are stiffer and less naturalistically rendered, and the glazes used on their somewhat dark, apparently unslipped earthenware bodies look rather muddy and are limited to shades of green and brown.¹

The faces that appear on the saddlebags of the Morse camel are particularly interesting. It has been suggested that these were affixed to the camels in order to frighten away evil spirits during long desert trips. According to another theory, the faces are a function of the figurines' funerary role.² They do not appear on saddlebags of earlier periods; one of the earliest examples comes from a tomb in Shensi Province, dated to 667 A.D.³ By 698 A.D., saddlebags of this type had become common.⁴ Eighth-century tombs contain figurines of camels both with and without these monster-mask-decorated saddlebags, which suggests that they were not considered essential accoutrements for all camels. What, if any, symbolic significance there is to this remains to be explored.⁵

Among camels excavated in China, the one that most resembles the Morse statuette comes from an undated, but probably early eighth century, tomb in the Loyang area. Its pose is similar, and it too is decorated with blue glaze.⁶ The western Asiatic groom paired with this camel looks a bit like an unglazed figurine from an undated tomb in Shensi. They have the same short, rounded beard and moustache.⁷

A camel and a groom quite similar to the Morse pair are part of a group of tomb figurines all decorated with blue glaze and all reportedly from the same tomb in Loyang. These rare pieces are in a private collection in Japan.⁸ Also similar, but appreciably larger in size, is a camel in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. This, too, is part of a large group of blue-decorated figurines said to have been excavated in Loyang.⁹ Undoubtedly the Morse camel and groom, which were acquired separately, were originally parts of equally splendid ensembles of tomb figurines.

1. Wenwu, 1972/3, pp. 22-23, p. 31, fig. 14:1; *Cultural Relics Unearthed During the Period of the Great Cultural Revolution*, vol. 1 (Peking, 1972), pl. 141.

2. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:221-22; René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, ed., *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture* (Tokyo, 1974), p. 206; Robert D. Jacobsen, "Ceramic Tomb Sets of Early T'ang," *Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bulletin* 64 (1978-80), p. 14. Jacobsen points out that these monster masks resemble those often found on the armor of guardian figurines and speculates that they relate to earlier apotropaic creatures adorning tombs.

3. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pl. 14.

4. *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pp. 37-38, pls. 53, 54.

5. For example, *Kaogu*, 1972/3, p. 33. In some tombs only unadorned camels have survived; see *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian*, p. 47, pls. 70-72. Jacobsen, p. 14, has also noted this and observed that pairs of camels, one loaded with saddlebags, the other not, are often found. Monster masks, probably of foreign origin, also decorated vessels, see Hin-cheung Lovell, "Some Northern Chinese Ceramic Wares of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," *Oriental Art* 21:4 (1975), pp. 336-37.

6. *T'ang Three-Color Ware of Loyang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pl. 80.

7. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province*, pl. 137.

8. Masahiko Sato, Gakuji Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art of the World*, vol. 11, *Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1976), pls. 184-88.

9. Jacobsen, "Ceramic Tomb Sets," pp. 14, 19, pl. 1.





48 CURLY-HAIRED YOUTH

T'ang dynasty, 7th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 11 ¼ in. (28.5 cm.)

49 CARAVANIER OR GROOM

Sui-Early T'ang dynasties, 7th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Height: 9 in. (22.9 cm.)

This curly-haired, barefoot youth wears knee-length pantaloons with a sash wrapped between his legs and over his chest. His arms are raised, as if he were holding or pulling a rope. His left hand is completely broken off. The calves of his legs are thick, and his feet are large. His thin nose and lips make him appear almost European. Traces of red pigment cling to his shorts. The groom is an older man from a different ethnic group. His double-lapeled coat is belted over trousers and boots. He wears a hat with a flattened top and a wide, turned-up brim. Transparent glaze covers his head and body. The earthenware used for the figurine of the groom is whiter than that used for the youth.

A reunification of China during the Sui dynasty and a subsequent conquest of parts of Central Asia during the T'ang dynasty contributed to an influx of foreigners into China during the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. Among the foreigners mentioned in T'ang historical texts are the people of K'un-lun, who are described as black-skinned and kinky-haired. We do not know the exact location of K'un-lun or the identity of its inhabitants. Current speculations are that it was in either Africa, Southeast Asia, or the Malay Peninsula.¹ Many tomb figurines are purported to portray natives of K'un-lun, but, while all of these depict boys in scanty dress, some have features that appear almost Caucasoid, and others display distinctively Negroid or Mongoloid facial characteristics. All the figures do have curly hair, however, and many of the so-called Caucasian youths were given dark skin.² Perhaps the Chinese were confused by the many dark-skinned people who came to China and classified them all as being from K'un-lun.

The Morse curly-haired youth very closely resembles a figurine discovered in the tomb of Cheng Jen-t'ai, dated to 664 A.D. Although slightly larger than the Morse figurine, this youth is also depicted with stocky legs and large feet. It does not appear as though the youth's skin was darkened in any way, which indicates that not all figurines of Caucasoid curly-haired youths had this trait.³ Other figurines of curly-haired boys from later tombs have Negroid or Mongoloid features. One such figurine is from a tomb dated to 850 A.D.; the Chinese believe this figure represents an African.⁴

The groom seen here is thought to represent a Khorezmian. These were people who once lived near the Oxus River, not far from the Aral Sea. They were well known as merchants and were noted in Chinese records for their ox carts.⁵ Though slightly smaller, the Morse groom resembles some glazed and painted figurines with identical costumes found in the tomb of Chang Shih-kuei, dating to 657 A.D.⁶ The Seattle Art Museum has figurines quite similar to both the curly-haired youth and the Khorezmian groom seen here.⁷

1. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), pp. 45-47; Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pp. 85-88; *Wenwu*, 1979/6, pp. 88-90.

2. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:107-108.

3. *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 36, pl. 10:3.

4. *A Selection of T'ang Tomb Figurines Excavated in Shensi Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1958), pl. 51; *Kaogu*, 1980/4, p. 382, p. 383, fig. 2; *Wenwu*, 1979/6, pp. 88-90, p. 88, fig. 2.

5. Mahler, *The Westerners*, pp. 72-74.

6. *Kaogu*, 1978/3, p. 171, pl. 8:7-8.

7. Mahler, *The Westerners*, pls. 22b, 23b; this book contains many other relevant pieces: pls. 21a-25c.

50 MERCHANT (?)

T'ang dynasty, 7th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 10 in. (25.4 cm.)

51 MERCHANT WITH HEAVY LOAD

T'ang dynasty, late 7th – mid-8th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 9 7/8 in. (25 cm.)

52 MERCHANT WITH EWER

T'ang dynasty, mid-7th – early 8th century A.D.

Painted earthenware

Height: 12 1/4 in. (31.1 cm.)

Although figurine 50's hands are clenched in front of his chest like those of a groom, he is tentatively identified as a merchant because his attire more closely resembles figurines indubitably of that type. He wears a short, belted coat, trousers, and boots. His hat has a high, folded brim and a squared-off top. Merchant 51 is dressed similarly except for a distinctive tall, peaked cap. Bowed down under the heavy load on his back, he cocks his head and trudges forward. His left hand clutches a ewer; his right hand grasps the strap holding his pack. Merchant 52, costumed like 50, holds a ewer in his right hand. He stands erect with his legs pressed together. His wide, staring eyes and handlebar moustache distinguish him from the other two figurines. All three of these pieces were made of light-colored earthenware that was originally painted, though little of this decoration remains.

Figurines of what are usually called Semitic merchants have stimulated particular curiosity among Westerners. Jews played an important role in trade transactions conducted from the Middle East through Central Asia to China, and some Jews even settled in China.¹ Other Middle Eastern peoples, who might also be considered Semitic, participated in the trade, too. Even within this initially homogeneous group characterized by prominent noses, deep-set eyes, and beards, subtle differences may be observed as exemplified by merchant 52. His features are said to resemble those of the "Mountain Jew" of the Caucasus.² All these merchants clearly reveal the cosmopolitan nature of Chinese society during the T'ang dynasty and the desire by members of that society to retain the diversity of their culture in the afterlife.

An exact excavated parallel to merchant 50 has proven difficult to find, though in costume and style he resembles some figurines from the tomb of Chang Shih-kuei, dated to 657 A.D.³ A figurine of a merchant that somewhat resembles him is in the Arthur Sackler collection, New York.⁴

A figurine of a merchant with a heavy load unearthed in Loyang is a little larger (30 centimeters high) than merchant no. 51, but is otherwise quite similar.⁵ The lifelike modeling of heavily burdened merchants indicates that they might have been made a little later than figurines like merchants 50 and 52. The Seattle Art Museum has a figurine of a stooped-over merchant similar to the one seen here.⁶

A fragment of a figurine of a merchant that resembles merchant 52 has recently been excavated in Kiangsu Province and probably dates to the seventh or eighth century.⁷ Transparent and brown-glazed versions of figurines like merchant 52 can be found in collections outside China. A fine statuette that resembles it, and is also made of painted earthenware, is in the Ezekiel Schloss collection.⁸

The ewers in the hands of merchants 51 and 52 resemble the phoenix ewer in the Morse collection (no. 53). Tomb figurines are often shown carrying vessels similar to the ewers carried by the Morse merchants.⁹

1. Ezekiel Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 2 vols. (Stamford, Conn., 1977), 1:105–107; see also *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, 1980/3, pp. 171–86.

2. Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 1:228–29.

3. *Kaogu*, 1978/3, p. 171, pls. 8:5, 7, 8. A related female figurine was found in a tomb dated to 664 A.D., *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 42, fig. 15:1.

4. Ezekiel Schloss, *Foreigners in Ancient Chinese Art* (New York, 1969), no. 12; Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 1:229; 2: pl. 17a. Merchant 51 was formerly in the Schloss collection.

5. *T'ang Three-Color Ware of Loyang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pl. 16.

6. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome, 1959), pl. 17b.

7. This fragment and the tomb from which it was excavated have been dated to the ninth century A.D. on the basis of a ninth-century coin discovered in the tomb. However, it seems more likely that the coin was a contaminant and that the tomb itself should be dated to the seventh or eighth century. See *Kaogu*, 1980/4, pp. 347–52, p. 350, fig. 5; compare *Wenwu*, 1972/7, p. 42, fig. 15:5; *Wenwu*, 1956/11, inside cover, fig. 2.

8. Schloss, *Ancient Chinese Ceramic Sculpture*, 1:228–29; 2: pl. 117.

9. *Kaogu*, 1965/9, pl. 9:13; *Kaogu*, 1980/6, p. 507, pl. 7:5.





T'ang dynasty, late 7th–first half of
8th century A.D.
Glazed earthenware
Height: 13 in. (33 cm.)

This flattened, pear-shaped vessel is crowned by the head of a phoenix biting a pearl. An arc-shaped handle with palmette-like ends stretches from the shoulder to the back of the bird's head. Molded panels decorate the two sides of the vessel, which rests on a splayed foot. One panel depicts a "dancing" phoenix on a lotus, framed by palmettes; the other shows a mounted archer delivering a "Parthian shot," also framed by palmettes. Ocher is the predominant glaze color. Blue is used as the background color on the molded panels and for the stripes on the rim of the mouth and the streaks that define the phoenix's head. Green and transparent glazes are also present. The small holes in the bird's mouth are not found on all similar vessels and may be the result of age or simply of a fault in firing. The earthenware body is almost white.

Phoenix ewers constitute one of the most distinctive types of T'ang lead-glazed earthenware.¹ They appear in two forms: with flattened, pear-shaped bodies such as that of this piece, or with rounded, three-dimensional, pear-shaped bodies. On the latter, the bird's beak normally functions as a spout and lacks the pearl. On the former type, liquids, assuming they were used, would have been poured in and out of the mouth of the vessel. The flattened ewers appear to have been made from two molded parts joined vertically. Seams run up the sides of the Morse phoenix ewer. The rounded ewers were probably also made from molded pieces, but these were stacked up and joined horizontally. One of the more common pairings of decorative subjects on flattened-body ewers is that seen here—a phoenix on one side and a mounted archer turning backwards in the saddle on the other. Though ultimately of foreign origin, the latter motif had been used in Chinese art as early as the Han dynasty.² Occasionally, the phoenix is paired with other motifs, such as a curly-haired boy riding a lion.³ Both polychrome and monochrome lead-glazed phoenix ewers were made.

A forerunner of these earthenware phoenix ewers, particularly the round-bodied type, is a pale celadon-glazed vessel excavated in Shensi Province and now believed to be of Sui date. Its pear-shaped body, splayed foot, and pointed lip may have been borrowed from Sogdian metal vessels.⁴ Whether the phoenix head itself is of foreign or Chinese origin is not clear.⁵ Ewers with animal- and bird-headed spouts were popular in China during the Six Dynasties period, and this presumably native Chinese form may have partially inspired the creation of the phoenix ewer in the Sui-T'ang period.⁶ The phoenix itself was a common subject in Han and Six Dynasties art, even appearing in one instance with a pearl in its mouth.⁷

A phoenix ewer with decoration and proportions similar to those of the Morse ewer was excavated in Loyang in 1961, but it was decorated mainly in cream-colored and green glazes, rather than in ocher and blue.⁸ The Tenri Museum, Nara, Japan, has a phoenix ewer that is almost identical to the Morse example, except that the bird's beak and the pearl within it are completely blue, the glaze runs down to the foot, and the molded design is slightly sharper.⁹ Most phoenix ewers do not have as much blue glaze as seen on the Morse vessel.

1. The dating of this piece is consistent with results of a thermoluminescence test (Oxford reference number 266 r 2).

2. William Watson, *The Genius of China* (London, 1973), p. 110, no. 173.

3. Masahiko Sato, Gakuji Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art of the World*, vol. 11, *Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1976), pls. 40, 41.

4. *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan*, 1980/1, pp. 74–75, pl. 3:1; Sato, Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art*, pl. 6; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Iranian Silver and Its Influence in T'ang China," in *Pottery and Metalwork in T'ang China*, ed. by William Watson (London, 1976), pp. 13–14; Boris Ilich Marshak, *Soghdian Silver*, trans. by G. M. Serghyev (Moscow, 1971), pp. 141–42, p. 4, figs. T7, T8.

5. Bird-headed ceramic ewers were made in the Middle East in the pre-Christian era, and Roman bronze animal-headed jugs have been attributed to the first through third centuries A.D. Thereafter, there is no evidence of Middle Eastern bird-headed ewers until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. H. C. Gallois, "Mutual Influences Between Chinese and Near Eastern Ceramics in the T'ang Period and Before," *Asiatic Review* 28:96 (1932), pp. 643–49, pls. A–D; Hin-cheung Lovell, "Some Northern Chinese Ceramic Wares of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," *Oriental Art* 21:4 (1975), p. 340.

6. *Six Dynasties Celadon Ware of Kiangsu* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pls. 42, 43, 47–49, 102, 103, 108, 109. This form persisted into the Sui and Early T'ang dynasties. See, for example, *Excavation of the Sui and T'ang Tombs at Sian* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), p. 13, pl. 17.

7. Annette L. Juliano, *Teng-Hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb* (Switzerland, 1980), pp. 38–40, fig. 108.

8. *Historical Relics Unearthed in New China* (Peking, 1972), pl. 150.

9. *Chinese Three-Color Ware*, Sun Mook Deluxe Series no. 2 (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1979), p. 22.

54 DISH WITH THREE FEET

T'ang dynasty, late 7th–mid-8th century A.D.

Glazed earthenware

Diam.: 9½ in. (24 cm.)

Supported on three cabriole feet, this dish has a flat bottom and shallow walls that curve into a broad, horizontal rim with a raised edge. A design consisting of a central hexagonal rosette surrounded by six leaflike forms composed of palmettes has been impressed in the interior of the dish. The palmettes are linked together by small rings and also by trefoil semicircles. Blue and green glazes, separated by the intaglio lines of the pattern, color this medallion. With the exception of the central "bead," the rosette is blue, as are the linking elements and the central bud of the fleur-de-lis-shaped figure within the leaflike forms. The entire design contrasts with the stippled transparent- and brown-glazed background. Green glaze covers the interior walls and rim and continues down the exterior, where it merges with a ring of brown glaze. A yellower glaze coats the upper parts of the feet. Three spur marks are visible on the interior. The earthenware is slightly pink.

A variety of large and small vessels in this form, as well as examples with three ring feet, were made during the T'ang dynasty. In addition to rosettes, a flying goose surrounded by lotuses was also a common design used on these vessels. The use of supplementary motifs and variations in the glaze colors and decoration give these vessels great diversity of decoration. For example, the impressed design might rest on a stippled ground, as seen here, or on a plain field of white. Clouds or waves might surround the central medallion on larger pieces.¹

The rosette medallions on these vessels may be likened to those found on silver vessels once thought to be Sasanian, but now classified as Sogdian. Certain motifs, such as a bird within a roundel, have also been found on vessels that may be Sasanian.² Exact parallels are, however, difficult to find, and it seems likely the Chinese modified and adapted these forms.

Foreign vessels may also have inspired the three-legged platter form, though there are examples of three-legged stoneware pieces dating from the third century in China.³ The form itself seems more suited to metal than clay, and thus it is not surprising to see it used in T'ang silver.⁴ An early ceramic variety of this dish may be the pale celadon-glazed tray set on four ring feet from the Sui-dynasty tomb of Chang Sheng, dated to 595 A.D. This vessel is almost flat with only a slightly raised rim and an incised design in the interior.⁵

Unfortunately, none of the many excavated examples that closely resemble the Morse dish come from dated tombs. These include a ring-footed dish from Shantung, which has the same impressed design as the Morse dish. Such pieces are usually attributed to the late seventh or early eighth centuries A.D. because of their polychrome lead-glazed decoration.⁶

A private collection in Japan contains a dish with the same medallion in blue and green, but yellow has been added to the leaves. It is set on a cream-colored field that is completely stippled with blue, including the rim.⁷ The brown and cream-colored stippling that appears on the Morse dish has been used to create a spectacular effect on the famous large trays in the collections of the Eisei Bunko, Tokyo, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.⁸

The three spur marks seen on the interior of the Morse vessel are frequently found on these dishes and trays. They seem to indicate that the pieces were stacked one atop the other when they were fired.⁹

1. Celia Garrington Riely, *Chinese Art from the Cloud Wampler and Other Collections in the Everson Museum* (Syracuse, New York, 1968), p. 46.

2. Boris Ilich Marshak, *Soghdian Silver*, trans. by G. M. Serghyev (Moscow, 1971), pp. 139–42, pls. 13–16, figs. T32, T38, T49; Prudence Oliver Harper, *The Royal Hunter* (New York, 1978), pp. 62–65.

3. Terukazu Akiyama et al., *Arts of China: Neolithic Cultures to the T'ang Dynasty, Recent Discoveries* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1968), pl. 121; *Six Dynasties Celadon Ware of Kiangsu* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pls. 24, 25.

4. *Wenwu*, 1957/4, pp. 10–11.

5. *Kaogu*, 1959/10, p. 544; Masahiko Sato, Gakuji Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art of the World*, vol. 11, *Sui and T'ang Dynasties* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1976), pl. 172.

6. *A Selection of Cultural Relics from Shantung Province* (in Chinese; Peking, 1959), p. 119, pl. 228; other related excavated pieces may be found in *T'ang Three-Color Ware of Loyang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1980), pls. 105–106.

7. Sato, Hasebe, and the Zauho Press, *Ceramic Art*, pl. 213.

8. *Ibid.*, pls. 54, 55, 214.

9. Riely, *Chinese Art*, pp. 46–48, pl. 20.





Vestiges of Buddhist Sculpture

ROBERT L. THORP

*Next we opened the Samantabhadra Hall and worshipped the image of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Three elephants stand side by side, and on their backs is placed a single image of the Bodhisattva. The hall both inside and outside is very impressive, and its colored paintings and carvings cannot be described in detail.*¹

So wrote a Japanese monk named Ennin (793–864 A.D.) after a brief visit to one of the many halls and cloisters on Mount Wu-t'ai in modern-day Shansi Province, during his lengthy sojourn in China. Ennin's diary and similar documents reveal some of the magnificence of Buddhist temples in medieval China, but Ennin, accustomed as he was to such temples, mentions only the principal icons of a hall and the ceremony performed therein. Most of the temples the monk visited during his pilgrimage in China are no longer extant, although a few exceptional monuments, such as the Great Goose Pagoda in modern Sian, have survived. What has come down to us of Chinese Buddhist art, including the sculptures displayed in this exhibition, is a mere fraction of a wealth of superb sculpture, painting, and architecture.

The objects that have survived are damaged and so identifiable only in general terms. Physical damage, such as the loss of a head or a limb, has taken a heavy toll. The original paint and ornaments on the sculptures have also deteriorated. Both the standing Bodhisattva no. 56 and the Potalaka Avalokiteśvara no. 59 retain traces of several colors of paint, but those vestiges can hardly suggest their original appearance. Unfortunately, there are few well-preserved examples of medieval Chinese Buddhist art—for example, the images in the cave-chapels of Tun-huang.²

When the images are damaged or are removed from their original setting, their iconographical and liturgical significance is frequently lost. The objects we label by the generic terms Buddha or Bodhisattva were made with a specific deity in mind. For example, images were carved of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni, or the Healing Buddha, Bhaiṣajyaguru. Dedicatory inscriptions, abundant at some sites, such as Lung-men, help us to understand why the sculptures were dedicated to certain deities and what roles the sculptures served.³ Taken out of an ensemble, and lacking iconographic details, Bodhisattvas nos. 56 and 58 cannot be identified with complete confidence as Avalokiteśvara rather than Mahāsthāmapraptā. The virtual anonymity of much Chinese Buddhist art is due to the fact that so little of it can be documented. The seemingly richer, more complex, iconography of Japanese sculpture of comparable periods can be explained in part by the greater integrity of those images, by the availability of more extensive documentation for them, and by the fact that they were not dissociated from their liturgical contexts.

Irrespective of such losses, works in both stone and wood from several of the greatest eras of Chinese Buddhist sculpture have endured. It should be noted, however, that the preponderance of stone images

1. Edwin O. Reischauer, trans., *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York, 1955), p. 255 (modified).

2. *The Mo-kao Chapels at Tun-huang* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1980); *Polychrome Sculpture from Tun-huang* (in Chinese; Peking, 1978).

3. Alexander C. Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Switzerland, 1959); Seiichi Mizuno and Toshio Nagahiro, *A Study of the Buddhist Cave-Temples at Lung-men, Honan* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1941), pp. 141–449.

from earlier periods and wooden carvings from later periods reflects the exigencies of preservation rather than the predominant aesthetic preferences of these periods. Buddhist texts are replete with accounts of figures in several media from early periods in China, and even today an impressive body of early gilt-bronze images survives. The selection seen here reflects the vagaries of the twentieth-century art market. Political instability in China before 1949 encouraged the vandalism of cave-chapel sites and ancient temple complexes, and the images taken away were by no means confined to what was readily portable.

The Morse collection illuminates some important stylistic developments within the history of Chinese Buddhist sculpture. The three stone images (nos. 55–57) are products of one of the great creative epochs in world art, manifestations, for lack of a precise Chinese term, of a “classic” native style, assimilating diverse foreign and local sources. The two wooden images (nos. 58 and 59), by contrast, represent a period in which earlier stylistic achievements were emulated, but not surpassed, and in which pictorial elements from a strong tradition of painting were used to animate three-dimensional works. However crude these historical assessments may be—and surely no area is more neglected in contemporary art history than Chinese Buddhist sculpture after the T’ang dynasty—one can admire the individual works of art in their own right. One need not be initiated into the mysteries of Buddhist belief or of art history to enjoy and respond to images such as those seen here.



55 HEAD OF A BUDDHA
Northern Ch'i dynasty,
mid-late 6th century A.D.
White marble
Height: 10¼ in. (26 cm.)

A benign and serene countenance, this head of a Buddha belonged to a figure carved in the round, either as part of an ensemble or as an independent image. The head still recalls the block of marble from which it was carved. The four side planes are broad and flat, meeting at nearly right angles, and the jaw and cheeks are also slightly squared. These impressions are offset in part by the smooth, rounded features and glistening surfaces of the highly polished stone. The hair has been left smooth; a clean line demarcates the forehead from the hair, with a pointed part centered over the nose. The Buddha's eyes are almost closed, his lips pursed. Several flesh folds are indicated on the cylindrical neck. Each ear is pressed flat against the head except for the lobes.

The chronology of Northern Ch'i sculpture has been enriched by the discovery of many dated steles and images,

including nearly one hundred unearthed at the site of the Hsiu-te Temple in Ch'ü-yang, Hopei.¹ White marble was especially favored in eastern North China, and, although the Morse head has no provenance, its stone suggests the Ting-chou area of Hopei. Stylistically, this Buddha head has much in common with the central image of the South Cave at Northern Hsiang-t'ang-shan, southwest of Han-tan in Hopei, ascribed by epigraphic criteria to the period about 568–572 A.D.² The quadrifaciality, smooth surfaces, and almost cherubic mien evident both on the South Cave Buddha and on this head indicate a date of the middle to late sixth century A.D.

1. Yang Po-ta, "The Artistic Styles and Characteristics of the Dated Images Unearthed at Hsiu-te Temple, Ch'ü-yang" (in Chinese), *Ku Kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an* 2 (1960), pp. 43–52; cf. Terukazu Akiyama, ed., *Arts of China*, vol. II, *Buddhist Cave Temples: New Researches* (Tokyo and Palo Alto, 1969), nos. 190–96.

2. Seiichi Mizuno and Toshio Nagahiro, *The Buddhist Cave Temples of Hsiang-t'ang-shan on the Frontier of Honan and Hopei* (in Japanese; Kyoto, 1937), pl. 46. On the dating of these caves see Alexander C. Soper, "Imperial Cave Chapels of the Northern Dynasties: Donors, Beneficiaries, Dates," *Artibus Asiae* 28 (1966), pp. 259–68.

Northern Ch'i-Sui dynasties, late 6th century A.D.
 Stone with traces of polychromy
 Height: 39 in. (99.1 cm.)

Erect and static, this freestanding image of Avalokitesvara (Chinese: Kuan-yin) is bedecked with a profusion of rich jewelry. The figure stands with its weight evenly distributed on two feet, and there is no imbalance at either the hips or shoulders. From the side, one sees a slight flexing, shoulders pulled back and belly swelling forward, as if the figure were at attention. Broad hips, wide, rounded shoulders, and a slim waist give this figure an hourglass shape. The drapery hanging from the waist is drawn to each side and melds with the pendant sashes draped over the arms at the elbows. The variegated surface of the skirt gives way to plainer, somewhat descriptive modeling on the upper torso. Perforations between the head scarves and neck, the arms and waist, and the pendant sashes and hips enliven what is otherwise a rather two-dimensional rendering.

Dignified and impassive, Avalokiteśvara gazes downward, as if detached in meditation. The head is slightly exaggerated in proportion to the body. Elevated brows and a long nose, like the proportions of the figure and the lines of the drapery, accentuate the vertical dimension. The rendering of the face presages the achievements of T'ang sculptors in rendering naturalistic features (no. 57). The Bodhisattva here wears a kind of shawl covering both shoulders, arranged in such a way that separate corners hang down the back and each arm. Two skirts are visible from the front where the longer hem of the undergarment is exposed. Regular fluting on this undergarment is supplanted on the outer skirt by wider, pleated panels, sashes tied in bows, and tassels carved in low relief. Scarves hanging from the headdress border the chest and then cross through a jade disk at the waist before looping across the thighs to rise over the arms. Chains of jewels hang on each shoulder, from the torque, and from the scarves at the chest. Several tiers of baubles hang below the disk at the waist.

The figure lacks a complete right arm, but intact examples—such as an Avalokiteśvara from the Sui period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art¹—suggest that this Bodhisattva may have held a lotus in his right hand. In most respects, the Morse figure is similar to a standing Avalokiteśvara now in the Cleveland Museum of Art; both these figures have slim bodies with lens-shaped lower torsos and rich panoplies of scarves, sashes, and jewelry. Both reflect the modest attention given to underlying body forms that is characteristic of the late sixth century.²

1. Alan Priest, *Chinese Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1944), pl. 57.

2. Saburo Matsubara, *Chinese Buddhist Sculpture* (in Japanese; Tokyo, 1966), nos. 195, 196.





57 HEAD OF A BUDDHA

T'ang dynasty, late 7th century A.D.

Gray limestone with traces of umber pigment

Height: 12½ in. (31.7 cm.)

This head may have been part of the central figure of a triad or other grouping, atop either a standing or a seated figure. The appearance of the stone suggests a provenance from Lung-men, the cave-chapel complex near Loyang—a region renowned for its limestone cliffs and richly endowed with sculpture of the highest quality during the first two centuries of the T'ang period. It is impossible to identify the head more specifically because it lacks both a liturgical context and a body.

The countenance of the Buddha rendered here is diffident and detached, almost august. In profile the head is especially heavy, with a thick neck, double chin, and massive skull. The eyes, nose, and mouth are pulled together tightly; they are juxtaposed with fleshy cheeks and a smooth, rounded forehead. The lines that define lips, nostrils, eyes, and brows are crisply cut, as sharply and plasti-

cally rendered as if the sculptor were working in malleable clay rather than hard stone. This strong carving contrasts with the bas-relief of the ears. Each meticulously cut snail curl blends pleasingly into the whole headdress.

This head shares many stylistic features with the figure of a standing Buddha holding a medicine bowl in the Hui-chien Cave on the western cliff at Lung-men, an ensemble dedicated by a monk in 673 A.D.¹ Both the overall proportions of the face and many other details correspond to the Morse Buddha. Buddha heads that may well be of Lung-men origin and of similar date are to be found in museum collections in Cologne, San Francisco, and Zurich.² The Buddha in Cologne is especially similar to the Morse head, notwithstanding minor differences in proportion.

1. *Cave Chapels at Lung-men* (in Chinese; Peking, 1961), pl. 126.

2. Gunhild Gabbert, *Buddhistische Plastik aus China und Japan* (Wiesbaden, 1972), no. 89; René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, ed., *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture* (Tokyo, 1974), no. 109; Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Sculptures in the von der Heydt Collection* (Zurich, 1959), no. 51.



58 AVALOKITEŚVARA (?)

Sung dynasty, 11th–12th centuries A.D.

Wood

Height: 43 in. (109.2 cm.)

From the late T'ang onward, the shift in Buddhist devotional practices to cults centering on individual deities led to the production of many images that were worshiped as independent icons. Whereas the Bodhisattva no. 56 was in all likelihood part of an ensemble—a triad or pentad, for example—that flanked a Buddha, the two wooden images in the Morse collection were made as objects of veneration in their own right. Of all the cults of the Sung period, that of Avalokitesvara flourished most widely and offers the greatest range of iconography. Sculptures of this deity often pose problems of identification, however, when, as with the two examples seen here, they lack a dedicatory inscription and their attributes are missing.

Clues to the identification of these figures lie in the more abundant pictorial arts of the period: iconographic drawings, printed religious texts, and paintings, most of which have inscriptions. The pose of the Bodhisattva depicted here, for example, is akin to a Kuan-yin on an engraved mirror, dated to the late tenth century A.D., found inside the sculpture of Śākyamuni at Seiryō-ji in Kyoto.¹ The figure on the mirror is labeled “Water Moon” Kuan-yin, a deity whose pictorial representation is associated with the great T'ang artist Chou Fang (active during the late eighth to early ninth century A.D.).² Similarity of pose, of course, does not guarantee identical iconography, but the considerable popularity of Water Moon Kuan-yin makes this attribution plausible in the absence of more decisive evidence.

This Bodhisattva sits in the relaxed pose usually called “royal ease,” with one leg raised to support the extended

right arm, and the other lying flat, flexed before the body. The figure is compact and self-contained in spite of the limbs extended at one side. The silhouette defines almost a right-angle triangle, with the stiff left arm serving as the short side and the hypotenuse extending from the high chignon to a point beyond the right hand and foot. In spite of the informal pose, the figure is stiff, as if the legs had been grafted onto the torso of a standing or seated image. While the large head harmonizes well with the broad shoulders, the proportions of the legs are puzzling; the right leg in particular is abnormally short in relation to the length of the body.

Even with several deep cracks in the wood, the face conveys a pleasingly humane and approachable demeanor. The jawline—somewhat squared, yet less fleshy than so much Sung sculpture—is in harmony with T'ang proportions. The tall chignon and carefully carved hairdo also resemble T'ang models. Kuan-yin here wears a shawl and heavy scarves draped both below the chest and looped from the right shoulder to the extended right arm. The thickness of the folds and pleats matches the deep carving of gathers and folds on the skirt. Most of the lower body is obscured by the copious drapery, although the exposed musculature of the chest is rendered in almost pictorial detail. The dramatic lines of the chest and patterns of the garments reveal the carver's debt to the pictorial conventions that so strongly influenced Sung sculpture.

The corpus of dated wooden Sung sculpture is slight indeed, and the dates that have been assigned are too diffuse to reveal clear patterns of stylistic development.³ However, the tentative approach the sculptor took toward the problem of posing the figure in an informal posture and the proportions of the face, so harmonious with T'ang design, lead us to assign an early date to this Bodhisattva.

1. Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryō-ji,” *Artibus Asiae* 19 (1956), pp. 5–55.

2. W. R. B. Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden, 1954 and 1974), vol. II, p. 290.

3. Laurence Sickman has conducted a pioneering survey of the development of Sung styles: “Sculpture from the Tenth to the Fourteenth Century,” in L. Sickman and A. C. Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China* (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 187–202.



59 POTALAKA AVALOKITEŚVARA

Southern Sung–Yüan dynasties,
13th century A.D.

Wood with traces of gesso and polychromy
Height: 19½ in. (49.5 cm.)

Potalaka Avalokiteśvara, perhaps the most popular deity of the Sung period, protected seafarers and was believed to inhabit a rocky isle in the southern ocean.¹ Carved from a single block of wood, this Avalokiteśvara sits in a modified “royal ease” pose. One leg is pendant; the other is pulled up to the level of the seat. The posture is languid, with the weight of the upper torso appearing to rest on the straight left arm; the body itself leans slightly backward. The head is downcast. The deity represented is not an active intercessor, but an approachable benefactor.

The seat has been rendered as sheets of rock faceted into regular, geometric units. Perhaps a mandorla or canopy was originally affixed at the notch on the rear of the seat. The Avalokiteśvara rests on a mat of rushes that are gathered into tassels, which extend on either side of the figure. The torso appears somewhat elongated, an effect that is accentuated by the cinching at the waist and midriff. Again

clothes, especially the skirt, obscure the body. Both legs are ill-defined beneath the skirt stretched across them. One large scarf sweeps in a wide arc from behind the left shoulder to the right knee. A number of sashes and scarves at the shoulders, chest, and waist have been sculpted at angles across the body, lending drama and surface detail to the figure. The head has heavy jowls, rounded brows, and cheeks, and sinks into the torso. A rudimentary image of Amitābha Buddha has been carved on the front of the headdress.

Another Avalokiteśvara, featuring a similar elongated torso and layered drapery on the skirt, in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, is dated to the thirteenth century A.D. The key monument for this period is the standing Avalokiteśvara in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. It is dated by its inscription to 1282 A.D., but differs in pose and costume from the Morse figure.²

1. Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana* (The Hague, 1967), p. 10.

2. René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture* (Tokyo, 1974), no. 144; Alan Priest, *Chinese Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1944), pl. 116.

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